Inclusive Education of Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Teacher Perspectives

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ABSTRACT

Although there has been an increase in the number of local studies targeting ethnic minorities in the last decade in Hong Kong, research which is centred on educational support and services with respect to inclusive education is still lacking. The perspective of teachers is, therefore, also missing. The objective of this study is to investigate teachers' perceptions of the inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system and how this may be better achieved via educational support and services. This study investigates the views and perspectives of teachers in relation to inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students, and constructs a substantive analytical framework of teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. The perspective of teachers is the focus of this research because they are the front line service providers and key change agents.

This study employs a qualitative research method, through the use of in-depth interviews. The framework, an outcome of the analysis, consists of four main themes: the perceptions, experiences, challenges and needed forms of support perceived by the participants, who have experience teaching ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. Under each main theme, there are two further levels categorized.

The study concludes that most of the participants hold a broad definition of inclusive education and are positive about the inclusion of ethnic minority students. However, based on their experiences, they hold a negative view of the chance of successful implementation of the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. They believe that there should be more appropriate teacher training on curriculum differentiation and classroom management for inclusive classes, promotion of small class teaching in mainstream schools, school-based home school partnership policy and support groups, more experience-sharing among the teachers of different schools, better collaboration with local communities and, most importantly, improved consultation with and greater engagement of teachers.

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DECLARATION

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the Regulations of the University of Bristol. The work is original except where indicated by special reference in the text and no part of the thesis has been submitted for other degree.

Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Bristol.

The thesis has not been presented to any other University for examination in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Signed: _____

Date: 26 April 2010

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

C&SD	Census and Statistics Department
CMI	Chinese as the Medium of Instruction
EDB	Education Bureau
EMI	English as the Medium of Instruction
EOC	Equal Opportunity Commission
GCE	General Certificate of Education
HKALE	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
IE	Inclusion Education
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SEN	Special Educational Needs
TEEMS	Teaching Experience with Ethnic Minority Student
TOC	Target Oriented Curriculum
TSA	Territory-wide System Assessment

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In Hong Kong, there is no multicultural education policy, at least partly because "the term multiculturalism is not often used in Hong Kong because Hong Kong is a predominantly Chinese community" (Mallozzi & Malloy, 2007:432). This is quite similar to Singapore, which is a multicultural nation, but in which "multicultural education is not a phrase used. Instead, multiculturalism is realized through the bilingual education policy" (Bokhorst-Heng, 2007:638). When educational issues concerning ethnic minorities are discussed in Hong Kong, the concept of inclusive education is generally applied (Heung, 2006). Even so, inclusive education of ethnic minorities has been afforded little emphasis in local educational policy and research, nor been a topic of significant discussion among education professionals in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong, a city of some seven million persons, has a Chinese majority and a small, varied and dispersed minority of ethnic groups, who constitute approximately five per cent of the population. Among the ethnic minority groups, South Asians in particular have experienced diverse forms of discrimination and rejection in Hong Kong, and have encountered various forms of unfair treatment due to their differences in cultural and religious practices (Ku et al., 2003; Loper, 2004; Aubourg, 2005). Their choice of schools is limited; have few opportunities to learn Cantonese and written Chinese to compete effectively for employment; are subjected to low quality available educational institutions; and are lacking in opportunities to communicate with the Chinese majority (Loper, 2004).

The number of local research studies targeted at South Asian ethnic minorities has increased in the last decade. The focus of these studies has been mainly on their needs and adjustment problems (Yang Memorial Methodist Social Services, 2000, 2002; Sung 2005). Others have concentrated on examining their life experiences (Ku et al., 2003), education equality (Loper, 2004; Aubourg, 2005), public attitudes and perceptions (Chan and Wong, 2005), their academic achievement (Yuen, 2007) and public acceptance towards various ethnic groups (C&SD, 2009). It has also been found that although they consider Hong Kong their 'home', the majority of them do not enjoy being with Hong Kong people (Ku et al., 2003), leading them to live in this 'home' in their own way, separating themselves from the main culture and limiting their development in Hong Kong (Chan, 2006).

The above studies have provided some insightful accounts of the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. However, local research which is centred on the educational support and services with respect to inclusive education is still lacking, and the perspectives of teachers in Hong Kong have not been addressed.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

This study aimed to investigate the views and perspectives of teachers in relation to inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students, and to construct a substantive analytical framework of teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. The study sought to give 'voice' to the unheard experiences and opinions of teachers. Thus, this study was directed by the following four research questions:

- What are the experiences of teachers concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What are the perceptions of teachers concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What are the challenges faced by the teachers in relation to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What forms of support are perceived to be needed by teachers to support the inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system?

1.3 Research Methodology

This was a qualitative study, analyzing the data collected from 20 in-depth individual interviews with teachers who had experience with ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. These teachers were from various types of schools: designated and non-designated, primary and secondary. Details are discussed in Chapter 4. The in-depth interviews were conducted in Cantonese, and then transcribed in Chinese for data analysis. Selected coded transcripts were finally translated into English and are discussed in this report. All the interviews were recorded with the consent of the teachers, and each interview lasted from one to one-and-half hours. The qualitative findings are presented in Chapter 5 & 6 on 'Findings and Discussion' and Chapter 7 on 'Conclusions'.

The research study focused on creating conceptual frameworks through applying inductive analysis to the data. The collected interview data were transcribed and coded into 'text units', comprising at most a few sentences, expressing a particular

view. The transcripts were further content-analyzed (see Appendix IX). This analysis of comments and views led to the development of an analytical framework. This framework, made up of themes, categories, and sub-categories, was thus directly derived from the interview data (see Appendix X). It underwent several iterations of modification and revision to ensure that it reflected an accurate and comprehensive coverage of the expressed views.

1.4 Terminology

Any attempt to deepen our understanding of a research topic has to start from a definition of terms. Definitions can appear to interrupt the flow of a narrative. If we simply go along with the variety of ways the terms are used we reproduce the inconsistencies and contradictions in such practice. The following are definitions of the key terms mentioned in this dissertation topic. Further discussion and review of the terms is found in Chapter 3: Literature Review.

1.4.1 Inclusion

According to UNESCO (2008), "inclusion is still thought of in some countries as an approach to serving children with disabilities within general educational settings. Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners." Inclusion involves respect for differences, and diversity in values and actions (Ballard, 2002).

Differing from assimilation, 'to be included' should not require that a person subordinate their culture and values to those of others. Of particular interest at

policy levels are both assimilation and integration. Each of these terms can lead to policy initiatives that encapsulate a set of ideas and ideals regarding the status, desirability, and management of ethnic minorities. Each also defines a specific arrangement for positioning minority groups vis-à-vis the state, as expressed in terms of government-minority interaction. Segregation denies the legitimacy of diversity through a process of compartmentalization, maintained by the threat of coercive force. Assimilation seeks to reduce, or even destroy, diversity through a process of absorption, conformity, and compliance. Integration is concerned with the incorporation of diversity into the mainstream, through fusion with the dominant sector, to establish a singular cultural entity.

Inclusion as an ideology appears to differ significantly from the ideas and ideals espoused by other policy arrangements. Its open promotion of the values and virtues of diversity is deemed a necessary, beneficial, and inescapable feature of society. It is underpinned by a belief that ethnic minorities have the right to retain aspects of their cultural past without loss of social equality. Ethnic minorities are entitled to recognition of their culture as well as to attainment of equality at educational, political, social and economic levels.

Notwithstanding this understanding, due to the close relationship between the notions of inclusion and multiculturalism, the literature on multiculturalism was also reviewed during the research process, (Atwater et al., 1994; Bigler, 1999; Clabo, 2002, Banks, 2001, 2003, 2006; Banks & McGee Banks, 2003; UNESCO, 2008). According to Feinberg (1996), the goal of multiculturalism is inclusion: "multiculturalists ... ... assure that no group dominates the public sphere in a way that serves to exclude from it the bearers of other cultural forms. Hence, the public sphere is viewed as an arena for cultural negotiation where the goal is inclusion."

1.4.2 Inclusive Education

"Inclusive education is a strategy contributing towards the ultimate goal of promoting an inclusive society" (EENET, 1998). Inclusive education:

- "acknowledges that all children can learn;
- acknowledges and respects differences (age, gender, ***ethnicity***, language, disability, HIV status, etc);
- enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children;
- is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society;
- is a dynamic process which is constantly evolving; and
- need not be restricted by large class sizes or shortage of material resources." (EENET, 1998)

"Inclusive education directly supports the core challenge of enabling multicultural education" (METJ, 2007). At school level, according to Booth and Ainscow (1998), inclusive education is about increasing participation in, and reducing exclusion from, the learning opportunities, cultures and communities of the mainstream.

1.4.3 Ethnic Minority Students

According to the 'Thematic Report – Ethnic Minorities' published by the Census and Statistics Department in December 2002, the term ethnic minority applies to people of non-Chinese ethnicity in Hong Kong. 'Ethnic minorities' is the term used by government departments and non-government organizations (NGOs) in Hong Kong (e.g. C&SD, 2002, 2007, 2009; HKSARG, 2000, 2001, 2008; YMMSS, 2000, 2002). Ethnic minorities may include Caucasians who are English-speaking (C&SD, 2002) but are more often used to refer to South Asians (Ku et al., 2005; Loper, 2004; Sung, 2005; YMMSS, 2000, 2002). "As far as

EMB[1] is concerned, children of ethnic minorities generally refer to South Asian children who are residing in Hong Kong" (Legislative Council Secretariat, 2007:1). Ethnic minority students are thus the students of non-Chinese ethnicity.

On the other hand, as interpreted by the Education Bureau (EDB), non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students are also referred to as ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. NCS students are students whose mother tongue is not Chinese and do not possess the necessary level of Chinese for everyday communication. In this dissertation, the terms ethnic minority students and NCS students are interchangeable.

1.4.4 Teachers

In this study, teachers are those teaching in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong. Data were collected by interviewing teachers who had teaching experience with ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

1.5 Chapter Outline

The content of the chapters are interrelated and arranged interdependently. As such, they comprise:

Chapter 1: Introduction ---- This chapter introduces the objectives and research questions, presents the definitions of important terms, explains the significance of the study, and outlines the dissertation.

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[1] Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) was re-organised as Education Bureau (EDB) in 2007.

Chapter 2: Context ---- This chapter serves to establish where this research fits with respect to previous research work and to establish what the important issues are. In order to increase understanding of the challenges faced by ethnic minorities in the area of education, this chapter describes the background of the study by discussing the environment: the demographic characteristics of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong education system, the findings of existing local studies, and related political issues.

Chapter 3: Literature Review ---- This chapter provides a review of relevant literature that provides a framework for this research, and demonstrates the need for this study.

Chapter 4: Study Design ---- This chapter outlines the research methodology and procedures employed in the analysis. This is a qualitative study based on interviews with a group of teachers.

Chapters 5 & 6: Findings and Discussion ---- These chapters provide a description of the results of the study and presents verbatim quotations from the transcripts that provide evidence for the substantive framework that has been generated.

Chapter 7: Conclusions ---- This chapter draws conclusions about the research questions, based upon the insights derived from the literature review and the findings. Implications of the study are elaborated in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge. Reflection on the methodology is presented, and limitations of the study are discussed. Possible areas for further investigation are also proposed. The thesis concludes with a personal reflective statement on the process of the study.

CHAPTER 2: CONTEXT

This chapter aims to establish where this research fits with respect to previous research work, and to determine the important issues. In order to increase understanding of the challenges facing ethnic minorities in the area of education, this chapter firstly describes the background of the study by scanning the environment: the demographic characteristics of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and the issues faced by the ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

2.1 Demography of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong

The ethnicity of a person depends on self-identification, normally on a social and cultural basis, as reported by Hong Kong's Census and Statistics Department (C&SD, 2007). For immigrant families in Hong Kong, they vary on the acculturation continuum. Some members, usually the oldest generation, most likely identify with their country of origin's cultural values and beliefs, while some, usually the younger generation, more likely identify with the cultural values and beliefs of people in Hong Kong (C&SD, 2007).

On the other hand, minority status is imposed by the dominant culture upon specific racial, ethnic, or gender groups within that society. Minority status carries the weight of perception and discrimination (Meyers, 1984). In addition, characteristics that are associated with particular economic groups have also been attributed to ethnicity. It is common, for example, to attribute some behaviours that are the result of generations of poverty to some ethnic and minority groups.

According to the definition used by the Census and Statistics Department, the term ethnic minority refers to people of non-Chinese ethnicity. In 2002, the first official

survey report, Hong Kong 2001 Population Census Thematic Report - Ethnic Minorities, containing baseline information on the demographic profile of ethnic minorities, was released by the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the C&SD of the Hong Kong SAR Government, in order to fulfill the requirement of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (HKSARG, 2001). Updated statistics released in the 2006 Population By-census included the following data.

2.1.1 Population by Ethnicity

As shown in Table 1, Hong Kong is a predominantly Chinese society, with more than six and a half million persons constituting 95 per cent of the population. The remaining 342,198 persons belong to ethnic minorities, which constitute approximately five per cent of the population.

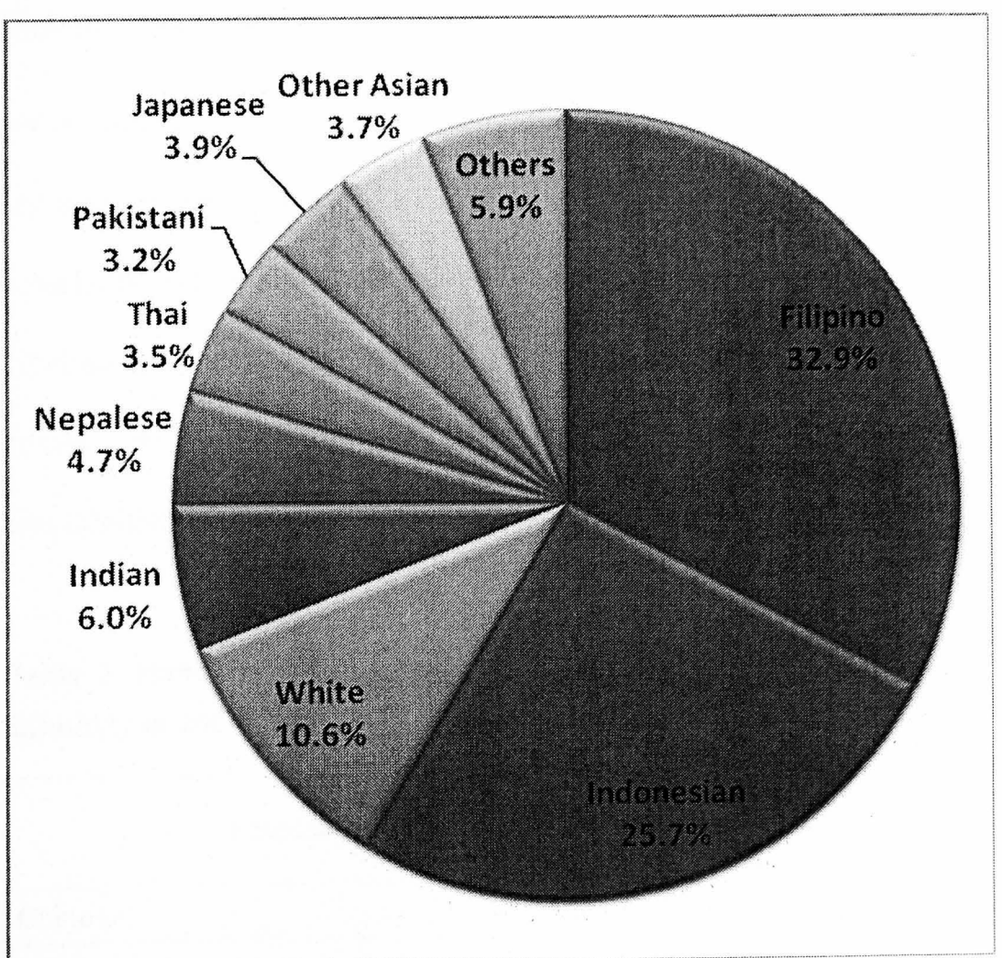
Table 1: Population by Ethnicity in 2006

Ethnicity	2006	
	Number	% of total
Chinese	6,522,148	95.0
Filipino	112,453	1.6
Indonesian	87,840	1.3
White	36,384	0.5
Indian	20,444	0.3
Nepalese	15,950	0.2
Japanese	13,189	0.2
Thai	11,900	0.2
Pakistani	11,111	0.2
Other Asian	12,663	0.2
Others	20,264	0.3
Total	6,864,346	100.0

Source: 2006 Population By-census Office, Census and Statistics Department, Last review date: 22 February, 2007

As shown in Table 1 and Chart 1, Filipinos (112,453) formed the largest minority group (32.9%), followed by Indonesians (87,840 or 25.7%), White (36,384 or 10.6%), Indians (20,444 or 6%), Nepalese (15,950 or 4.7%), Japanese (13,189 or 3.9%), Thais (11,900 or 3.5%), Pakistanis (11,111 or 3.2%), Other Asian (12,663 or 3.7%) and Others (20,264 or 5.9%). Most Filipinos, Indonesians and Thais were female, reflecting significant numbers from these countries working as domestic helpers in Hong Kong (C&SD, 2006). According to the 2001 Thematic Report, the number of individuals from ethnic minority groups under age 15 was 82,724 and the percentage of ethnic minority youth in the total youth population age 15 to 24 increased from 1.6 per cent in 1991 to 4.7 per cent (43,038). More and more younger ethnic minorities have been in Hong Kong.

Chart 1: Composition of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong in 2006



Remarks: The chart is generated based on the data in Table 1.

The report also found that more than 20 per cent of all ethnic minority respondents of the 2001 Population Census encountered difficulties during their time in Hong Kong. Language issues were overwhelmingly the most common source of such problems, with 'Other difficulties' mostly related to housing and employment. Only about 55 per cent of the population of the ethnic minorities aged five and above were able to speak Cantonese. Few respondents claimed the ability to write and read Chinese.

Of those who encountered difficulties, most (84%) sought help from friends, employers, colleagues or relatives. Only 10 per cent asked for help from voluntary organisations or social workers, and less than seven per cent sought assistance from Government departments.

2.1.2 School Attendance

As shown in Table 2, among the population undertaking full time study in primary, secondary and tertiary education in Hong Kong, there were 1,245,809 (97.75%) Chinese students and 28,722 (2.25%) ethnic minority students. These were South Asians (including Filipinos, Indonesians, Nepalese, Vietnamese, Thais, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, Sri-Lankans, Indians), other Asians (Korean and Japanese), Westerners (British, Americans, Canadians), mixed and others.

Table 2: Hong Kong Resident Population Studying Full Time in HK by Ethnicity in 2006

Ethnicity	2006	
	Number	% of total
Chinese	1,245,809	97.75
Filipino	2,194	0.17

Indonesian	211	0.02
Japanese	2,542	0.20
Nepalese	2,344	0.18
Thai	357	0.03
Indian	3,329	0.26
Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri-Lankan	3,434	0.27
Vietnamese	312	0.02
Korean	1,033	0.08
Other Asian	291	0.02
White	5,079	0.40
Black	72	0.01
Mixed	7,343	0.58
Others	181	0.01
Total	1,274,531	100.00

Source: 2006 Population By-census Office, Census and Statistics Department, Last review date: 22 February, 2007

2.2 Government Education Policies

The Hong Kong Government has been providing basic education at no cost for primary and junior schooling through its public school system for over three decades. Essentially, children in Hong Kong aged from six to fifteen have the right to attend a public school, irrespective of family status, gender, ethnic origin, religious beliefs and physical or mental ability. In 2008/9, the policy and provision was extended to senior secondary schooling and to full-time courses at the Vocational Training Colleges. It is noted that many children aged three to five attend kindergartens for pre-primary education (EDB, 2007).

In general, secondary schools have three years of junior secondary studies, followed by a two-year senior secondary programme. In line with changes in the tertiary sector, in September 2009 the Hong Kong SAR Government introduced a

three-year programme of senior secondary study (EDB, 2007).

The policy with respect to language, obviously of significance to ethnic minorities, is somewhat complex, reflecting Hong Kong's social and recent political history. The Government's challenging aim is for all students to be trilingual (with respect to Cantonese, Putonghua and English) and biliterate (with respect to written Chinese and English). Though English is a core subject from the start of primary education, the majority of public primary and secondary schools use Chinese as the medium of instruction. In recognition of the difficulties faced by Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) children and to encourage them to study the local curriculum, a range of support structures are in place to help NCS students adapt to and integrate into the Hong Kong educational system (EDB, 2007).

2.3 Placement Arrangement

The educational system allows for flexibility in making arrangements for inclusive education. In some instances, schools may compartmentalize cultural diversity through an additional daily curriculum. In others, inclusive education is embraced as a philosophy that suffuses the entire school system. Questions which arise from this flexibility include: 'Which of these styles is preferable?', 'What realistically can be implemented in light of prevailing constraints and demands?', and 'How much diversity can a school system tolerate without loss of core cultural values, a sense of purpose, coherence, and integrity?'

In Hong Kong, the educational system can be categorized into four types of school: designated school, mainstream school, designated class in mainstream

school and others.

2.3.1 Designated School

One of the measures taken to ease the challenges faced by NCS students has been the introduction by the Hong Kong Government of 'designated schools' (see Appendix V). Schools which have enrolled significant numbers of NCS children are invited to join the growing number of designated schools, which are provided with focused support for learning and teaching, especially with respect to Chinese language studies. There are now over 20 of such schools, with the majority (16) in the primary sector. The number is expected to increase in the near future. Grants are available from the Government (between HK$300,000 and HK$600,000 per year) for school-based support schemes, and additional professional assistance is available for the teaching and learning of Chinese (EDB, 2008).

2.3.2 Mainstream School

For mainstream schools, the Government has introduced an Initiation Programme, which is available to newly-arrived NCS students. This is full-time of six-months' duration, and provides appropriate and timely support educational and community integration. For those using the Government's placement service for direct entry into mainstream schools, a 60-hour Induction Programme is provided through commissioned non-governmental organizations (NGOs). The mainstream schools admitting NCS students (government, aided and caput schools) are provided with an additional grant through School-based Support Scheme (SBSS) programmes (EDB, 2008).

2.3.3 Designated Class

Those NCS students taking advantage of the above provisions are said to be attending 'designated class'. The Initiation Programme thus provides a form of classroom experience that aims to increase students' competency in both Chinese and English language, as well as helping with adjustment issues and fostering personal development. After completion of the programme, the students are assisted with placement into a mainstream school. The Induction Programme run by the NGOs has similar aims (language and learning skills) and is available for newly arrived (less than a year) NCS students and those who have been in a local school for less than a year. It is offered flexibly, daytime or evening, weekdays or weekends, depending on the needs of the NCS students.

2.3.4 Others

The SBSS Grant scheme mentioned above can be accessed by all public sector schools to support the admission and assistance to eligible NCS students. A variety of access pathways is available, so that parents of NCS children can either approach a school directly, or work through a Regional Education Office or the Placement and Support Section of the EDB. Again, the SBSS grants are used for language and learning purposes, principally through the provision of Chines or English language tutorials.

2.4 Inclusion of Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong

Studies of the educational concerns of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong have been undertaken in recent years, addressing issues such as language barriers and education needs (Yuen, 2007), emotional and behavioral issues for ethnic minority students (Heung, 2006), education of South Asian ethnic minority groups (Ku et al., 2005), inequality faced by ethnic minority students in the educational system (Aubourg, 2005; Loper, 2004; Unison Hong Kong, 2002), and school life adaptation of school-age ethnic minorities (Unison Hong Kong, 2001; YMMSS, 2000). Previous studies focussed on revealing the challenges faced by minority ethnic groups at different stages of the education system in Hong Kong in the areas of access to educational opportunities, educational provisions and curriculum design. All of these are interrelated and inter-affected. The challenges faced by ethnic minority students, identified by the above and other studies, will now be discussed.

2.4.1 Public Acceptance and Perception

Two recent surveys have examined the degree of public acceptance of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. The first was reported by Chan and Wong (2005), who surveyed 512 Hong Kong residents. A major finding was that over 60 per cent believed that ethnic minorities are negatively perceived by Hong Kong people. Notwithstanding this, about 80 per cent of respondents agreed that equal educational opportunities should be provided for ethnic minorities. For respondents with children in schools with ethnic minority students, though, around a quarter disagreed with the statement. Given this, it seems apparent that there is a

level of discriminatory attitude exhibited by the Hong Kong population with respect to the education of ethnic minority students. That is, while supporting equal opportunity principles, they are unsupportive of integrating ethnic minority students with their own children in school. This attitude of parents clearly has the potential to undermine efforts towards the integration of ethnic minority students through educational opportunities (Chan & Wong, 2005).

Continuing this finding, it was found that those with a higher level of attainment in education were more aware of negative perceptions and the serious nature of the racial discrimination displayed by Hong Kong people towards ethnic minorities. Furthermore, they also tended to have more positive perceptions of ethnic minorities in general. With respect to age-related findings, older persons tended to be less aware of negative attitudes and racial discrimination, and held more positive attitudes towards ethnic minorities, though they were less supportive of affirmative action. Statistically significant positive correlations were also found between the perceptions of Hong Kong people with respect to attitude and acquaintance with ethnic minorities. That is, those who have more interaction with ethnic minorities have more positive perceptions of them, and vice versa (Chan & Wong, 2005).

In 2008, the Census and Statistics Department conducted an extensive survey of 10,000 households (a response rate of 75 per cent) in Hong Kong concerning racial acceptance. Randomly selected participants were interviewed about their level of acceptance of ethnic groups under a range of roles (such as service providers, parents, neighbours and employers). The interviews also sought to find the levels of awareness of existing channels for the promotion of racial acceptance and current efforts on the eradication of racial discrimination. Essentially, as over 95 per cent of interviewees were Chinese, the report provided evidence of the attitudes

of Hong Kong's Chinese population towards racial acceptance (C&SD, 2009).

As parents, over 80 per cent of interviewees aged 15 and over considered it 'very acceptable / quite acceptable' to send their children to a prestigious school where most students were Chinese, Caucasian or Japanese / Korean. When the proviso was for a prestigious school with most students from other ethnic groups[2], the responses rating it 'very acceptable / quite acceptable' ranged from 55.5 per cent to 66.8 per cent. Awareness of the means of promotion of racial acceptance, along with efforts to eradicate racial discrimination was mixed, with over half (52.8%) of the Chinese interviewees aware of the use of radio and television. The percentage dropped significantly for other channels of communication, with awareness of the role of newspapers and magazines at just over a quarter (26.4%), "services, including hotline and complaint handling by Government departments" (19.4%), the role of schools and teachers (12.6%), the use of leaflets and pamphlets (11.4%) and "advertisements in MTR / buses" (10.8%) (C&SD, 2009).

2.4.2 Language Policy

"Exclusion from educational opportunities is one of the main factors leading to poverty among ethnic minorities. Exclusion results from many causes. For example, students who do not have sufficient command of the local language to perform well academically may find that their poor academic performance limits their chances of advanced education" (Oxfam, 2004). In the U.S., "the educational task of becoming American is viewed as a matter of becoming

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[2] Including Indonesian / Malaysian / Filipino; Thai / Vietnamese / Cambodian; African; Indian / Pakistani / Bangladeshi / Nepalese and Arabian.

English speaking" (Olsen, 1997:91). Hong Kong is facing a similar situation, relating to the speaking of Chinese/Cantonese. According to Chan and Wong (2005), there are four major difficulties that ethnic minorities face in their daily life, these being language (contributing 23.8%); communication/integration with majority (21.7%); living habit (11.9%) and others (10.9%) (Chan & Wong, 2005). This concurs with the findings of another Hong Kong survey (Aubourg, 2005) which reported that the majority (over 80 per cent) of ethnic minority parents believed that language barriers precluded them sending their children to Chinese schools. As Chinese was not taught as a second language, this made integration too difficult and reduced career prospects.

English was the medium of instruction until 1997, when the Education Department introduced the requirement to use Chinese as the Medium of Instruction (CMI) in the majority of secondary schools. The purpose of this change was to arrest the decline in the standard of Chinese. The outcome of this mother tongue teaching policy is that only 114 secondary schools are permitted to use English as the Medium of Instruction (EMI). Ethnic minority students who do not read and write Chinese thus have fewer choices of school (Aubourg, 2005).

Another outcome of this policy is that many ethnic minority children are forced to attend International Schools, which for many are prohibitively expensive. Some of such schools (E.g. English Schools Foundation) are subsidized by the Hong Kong Government, but fees still reach up to around HK$78,000 (US$10,000) per year. Many ethnic minority children speak Cantonese fluently, but are often unable to write Chinese, thus rendering them unable to sit public examinations. A marginalizing effect results, with not enough places in the public school system for ethnic minority students (Aubourg, 2005).

Another effect, reported by Loper (2004) is that significant numbers of ethnic minority students end up in the lowest band (Band 3) schools that offer language classes in their first language, such as Hindi or Urdu. Examples include the Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School, with a student population dominated by Indian (38 per cent) and Pakistani (41 per cent) students. Loper (2004) also reports claims by the S.S. Guru Gobind Singh Ji Educational Trust that nearly all (90 per cent) of Punjabi (Indian) students attend such schools in Hong Kong.

Aubourg (2005) reports that language differences and consequent difficulties are at least partly responsible for seemingly lower standards within schools catering for ethnic minority students, with poor public examination results, communication difficulties between teachers and parents, coupled with a lack of professional development for teachers with respect to multicultural classrooms.

None of this is surprising, given the key contribution of language in society and educational success. Discussion of educational integration is often in tandem with consideration of language education, so that consideration of the education of ethnic minorities tending to focus on language learning (Yuen, 2007).

2.4.3 Integration Education Policy

The above-mentioned School-based Support Scheme (SBSS) has been available since 2000, and provides support services that match those given to new arrivals from mainland China. The block grants of HK$2,750 per primary student and HK$4,080 per secondary student are the product of Government policy targeted at integration education. This is also a focus of the earlier-mentioned Induction and Initiation Programmes to support the educational integration of NCS children who

have never studied in Hong Kong (Sung, 2005).

The implementation of policy has had some seemingly negative outcomes, with Ku et al. (2005) reporting that over half of the ethnic minority students believing that their educational opportunities are less than those of local Hong Kong students. As the system changed, ethnic minority students no longer enjoyed first round placement in the allocation to NCS schools. Further, under EDB direction concerning integration education, seven NCS directly subsidized primary schools cancelled classes for ethnic minority students. Disappointed parents looked for alternatives, such as considering home study, sending their children to private primary schools or making application again in the following year. The impression gained by some groups was that the choice of schooling had been limited, rather than expanded or improved (Sung, 2005).

2.4.4 Segregation of Communities

The apparent segregation of communities has led to the expression of significant concerns.

> "The central allocation system assigns ethnic minority candidates who do not speak Chinese exclusively to the schools traditionally accepting ethnic minority pupils, thus creating a dual system of separate communities. Clearly, there are few opportunities for Chinese children to come into contact with ethnic minorities as peers, and vice versa. Many of the ethnic minority youth in Hong Kong have few Chinese friends. This lack of interaction may worsen prejudices. The rejection of and discrimination against ethnic minority youth may seriously make vulnerable their formation of identity and affect their later growth" (Aubourg, 2005:14).

In Yuen's (2007) study on the barriers to achievement of Nepalese students in Hong

Kong, she concludes that Nepalese students who study with local children seem to be better integrated, although they seem to prefer their own ethnic groups and there are reports of discrimination. In some schools, she finds that Nepalese students as well as students from other ethnic origins are semi-segregated by having an English stream specially created for them. In schools that cater mainly for ethnic minorities, they are segregated from the local pupils. The segregated arrangements may affect their integration into society in the long term, and constrain their opportunity to use Chinese (Yuen, 2007).

2.5 Concluding Remarks

There are a number of limitations with respect to existing literature concerning the education of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. First, the issue is under-researched. Second, there have been significant changes during the last few years, and some findings identified in earlier studies may no longer be relevant, and need to be brought up-to-date. For example, students' access to schools (Loper, 2004) may have improved since the formal opening of the new system.

Third, the focus of most local research has been on students in secondary schools (e.g. YMMSS, 2002; Loper, 2004; Unison Hong Kong, 2001). Many ethnic minority students begin their education in primary school, and little investigation has been done at this level.

The government's supportive mechanisms have been designed for the ethnic minority students as a group, the South Asians, without consideration of

inter-ethnic differences, their diverse culture and needs. Statistics (HKSARG, 2000, 2001; C&SD, 2002) have shown that there are basic differences in age structure, education attainment, occupation, income, and language competence among the minority groups. In order to formulate plans that can better cater for them, studies on the educational needs and barriers to achievement of separate ethnic groups are required.

Fifth, although people generally supported that equal educational opportunities should be provided for ethnic minorities, they are not supportive of integrating ethnic minority students with their own children in school (Chan and Wong, 2005). This discriminatory attitude of parents has the potential to undermine efforts of inclusive education of ethnic minority students through educational opportunities.

Sixth, according to international literature, ethnic minority students encounter various barriers in their school achievement, but in Hong Kong, the EDB seems to identify language as the single major barrier to their achievement. This suggests that their supportive mechanisms may be limited in scope. Finally, very few local researches such as Yuen's study (2007) has studied the schools' strategies to support these students from the teachers' perspectives.

CHAPTER 3: Literature Review

This chapter presents a review of selected literature that provides an underpinning and a framework for the current research, as well as demonstrates the need for this study. Literature concerning the factors affecting educators' perceptions towards inclusive education and the implementation of inclusive education are reviewed.

3.1 Inclusive Education

There is no official definition of inclusive education in Hong Kong. Referring to the U.K., according to the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System (2001), inclusive education is about:

- *"Acknowledging that all children and youth can learn and that all children and youth need support.*
- *Accepting and respecting that all learners are different in some way and have different learning needs which are equally valued and an ordinary part of our human experience.*
- *Enabling education structures, systems and learning methodologies to meet the needs of all learners.*
- *Acknowledging and respecting differences in learners whether due to age, gender,* ***ethnicity****, language, class, disability or HIV status.*
- *Changing attitudes, behaviour, teaching methodologies, curricula and the environment to meet the needs of all learners.*
- *Maximising the participation of all learners in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning.*
- *Empowering learners by developing their individual strengths and enabling them to participate critically in the process of learning.*
- *Acknowledging that learning also occurs in the home and community, and within formal and informal modes and structures."*

From the above, we can conclude that inclusive education aims to address the educational needs and aspirations of all learners in non-threatening and supportive learning environments. This includes learners who have been formally disadvantaged and excluded from education because of barriers to learning.

Apart from the above, there are many definitions of inclusive education. Some definitions focus on human interaction (Forest & Pearpoint, 1992), perceiving inclusion as a way of dealing with difference. Some adopt an institutional perspective; Ballard (1995), Clark et al. (1995), and Rouse & Florian (1997) focus on organisational arrangements and school improvement.

Fundamentally, inclusive education aims to increase participation in, and reduce exclusion from, the learning opportunities, cultures and communities of the mainstream (Barton, 1997). The notion of participation in education goes well beyond access. It implies learning alongside others and collaborating with them in common lessons. It includes active engagement with what is learnt and taught and having an input in how education is experienced. Participation also involves being recognized and accepted for oneself. Moreover, schools can be seen as a major, but not the only, source of education within communities, which adds further intricacy to notions of participation in education. Education is wider than schooling. It is an activity in, for, and with communities. Inclusive education is a never-ending process, striving towards the ideal when all exclusionary forces within education and society are gone.

The development of inclusive cultures and increasing participation require a transformational rather than an assimilationist view of inclusion. An assimilationist view expects students and staff to fit into exclusive cultures

embodying restricted notions of normality. Curricula, teaching approaches and views of achievement are seen as fixed, and failure for many is guaranteed. A transformative view starts from a recognition of diversity amongst students and sees it as a rich resource for learning. There is no single standard of achievement. Schools adapt to the identities, experience, knowledge and skills of their students and are constantly transformed by them (Slee, 1997).

Inclusive education also implies the existence of boundaries around an entity within which and from which exclusion can occur. Many studies (Hopkins et al. 1996; Lipsky & Gartner, 1997; Rouse & Florian, 1996; Sapon-Shevin, 1992; Sebba, 1996) of inclusive education focus on particular schools. This can limit the understanding of inclusion within schools from the resources and exclusionary pressures outside them. In focusing on schools, we can miss the way schools themselves contribute to exclusion in the multiplicity of selections between schools, on the basis of class, attainment, faith and disability. It is more appropriate to see inclusion in terms of an area within which schools are located. This allows questions to be raised, not only about schools and their surrounding communities, but also about what it entails to be part of a city, to be participating citizen.

Therefore, apart from a commitment to manage diversity, inclusive education can be approached as an offshoot of education in general. We need to compare and contrast the contents, styles and purposes of inclusive education with education in general. The objectives of inclusive education may overlap with latent educational functions such as the reproduction of the social, political, and economic order.

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3.2 Scope of Inclusive Education

Inclusive education can encompass a variety of domains, and its scope is open to debate. Inclusive education may focus on issues pertaining to cultural identity and self-image, and concentrate on the skills and resources that ethnic minority students require to succeed in the outside world. These can range from initiatives that embrace the total school environment to those concerned with specific aspects, such as curriculum reform, teacher training, textbook selection, or student behaviour modification (Banks, 2006). For some, the attainment of cultural awareness is important; for others, the concept of intercultural understanding and communication is the key; for still others, the problems of power need to be addressed; and for yet others still, the issues of ethnic relations and discrimination are central.

If inclusive education is to become better understood and implemented in ways more consistent with theory, its various dimensions should be more clearly described and conceptualized. Banks (2001) posits five dimensions: content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and empowering school culture. Literature with respect to each dimension will now be reviewed.

3.2.1 Content Integration

Content integration focusses on the extent to which educators and teaching resources use examples, data and information from various cultures and groups to present key concepts, principles, processes, and theories in a particular subject area

or discipline. The literature (Banks, 2003; Butler & Walter, 1991; Lauter, 1991) on content integration deals with what information should be included, how it should be integrated, where it should be located within the curriculum, and whether it should be taught within a separate course or as part of the core curriculum. Another important issue concerns who should be the audience for the ethnic content, and whether it should be for all students or primarily for ethnic minority students (Banks, 2003).

3.2.2 Knowledge Construction

Knowledge construction concerns the process by which scientists create knowledge, and how disciplinary cultural assumptions, referential frames, perspectives and biases affect how knowledge is constructed within the discipline (Hartsock, 1998). The implementation of this process in the classroom sees teachers helping students to understand how knowledge is created and how ethnic and social-class positions influence knowledge construction (Gould, 1996).

3.2.3 Prejudice Reduction

The idea of prejudice reduction within inclusive education investigates the nature of children's ethnic attitudes and develops applicable strategies to assist students in developing more democratic attitudes and values (Oskamp, 2000; Van Ausdale & Feagin, 2001). Prejudice reduction emphasizes the importance of providing students with experiences that prepare them for equal-status interactions prior to assigning group tasks to students from different ethnic backgrounds.

3.2.4 Equity Pedagogy

As explained by Banks (2003), teachers applying equity pedagogy use techniques and teaching methods that assist and promote the academic achievement of students from diverse ethnic and social-class groups. Some researchers (Heath, 1983; Ladson-Billings, 2003) believe that to understand their learning characteristics, ethnic minority students should be observed and described in ethnographic studies, rather than classifying them into several simple categories. These researchers believe that thick descriptions of the learning and cultural characteristics of ethnic minority students are needed to guide educational practice.

3.2.5 Empowering School Culture

A school can be conceptualized as a social and cultural system (Erickson, 2003). The idea of an empowering school culture and social structure outlines the process of restructuring the school's culture and organization so that learners from a range of ethnic and social-class groups experience educational equality and cultural empowerment (Mehan et al., 1996; Valenzuela, 1999). Creating an empowering school culture for inclusive education with ethnic minority students involves changing the culture and organization of the school. Among the variables that help to restructure a school culture so that students from diverse ethnic and cultural groups are empowered are grouping practices (Yonezawa et al, 2002), the social climate of the school, and staff expectations for student achievement (Levine & Lezotte, 2001). For example, teachers need to examine their knowledge base and honestly assess their ethnic attitudes; this takes time and requires access to a variety of instructional materials. Many school reform efforts fail because the roles,

norms, and ethos of the school do not change in ways that make institutional reform possible.

3.3 Personal Beliefs and Attitudes

After discussing the definition and scope of inclusive education with respect to minorities, this section reviews previous studies on the effect of teachers' beliefs and attitudes toward implementation. A Canadian research study (Jordan, Lindsay and Stanovich, 1997) identified that the views of teachers concerning their responsibilities in dealing with excluded students influences not only their revealed attitudes towards inclusion, but also their teaching styles and practices in heterogeneous classrooms.

The finding reflects those of Stanovich and Jordan (1998), who attempted to predict specific teacher behaviours associated with effective teaching in heterogeneous classrooms. This research was more sophisticated than most other studies, as it was based on observation of teaching behaviours, rather than self-reports and interviews. The results showed that the most significant predictor of effective teaching behaviour was the school norm, as displayed by the principal's attitudes and beliefs about heterogeneous classrooms.

Such studies have revealed that the schools' ethos and the beliefs of teachers impact on their attitudes towards inclusion, which, as a result, strongly affect practice. It appears that teachers who willingly accept a role that includes teaching a wide diversity of students, and feel confident in their instructional and management skills,

are able to successfully implement inclusive programmes. Overall, the more receptive that teachers are towards inclusion, the higher is their teacher efficacy (Soodak, Podell and Lehman, 1998).

Inclusive education succeeds through the implementation of significant change that influences every aspect of a school, altering the daily activities of teachers and administrators, and also challenging their traditional attitudes and beliefs (McLeskey and Waldron, 2000). Thus, increasing positive attitudes of teachers in inclusive education starts with personal dedication to the work to be done (Cavusculu, 2006).

Other recent studies have revealed educators' attitudes towards inclusive education. For example, a Danish study (Open Society Institute, 2007) found that ethnic minority pupils were often perceived as a problem by Danish teachers in a City school. With the increase in the proportion of second generation pupils (still referred to as immigrants) exacerbated by the loss of some white pupils transferring to other schools, teachers believed that the high proportion of ethnic minority pupils was giving the school a bad reputation. Teachers also experienced greater difficulties with parents, whose expectations differed from their other students. Unlike Danish parents, ethnic minority parents were seen by teachers as 'very passive', and 'only interested in receiving information about their children's assessment'. The children were also perceived by teachers to be posing problems. This was particularly so in the case of Muslim boys. Their behaviour towards other pupils and teachers was seen as threatening. Teachers complained about verbal and physical violence, arguing that the pupils who apparently had most difficulty in orienting themselves to the Danish way of life were Muslim children.

An American study (Vaughn et al., 1996) studied teachers' perceptions of inclusive education through the application of focus group interviews. Most of the teachers were not involved in inclusive programmes, and revealed strong negative feelings about inclusive education, believing that principals and administrators did not appreciate classroom realities. Several factors that contribute to the success of inclusion were mentioned by teachers, including class size, inadequate resources, how much all students might benefit from inclusion and insufficient teacher training.

As mentioned, the evidence indicates that educators' initial negative or neutral attitudes with respect to inclusive education can change over time, as an outcome of experience with a programme, and expertise developed during programme implementation. It thus seems highly worthwhile to further study the factors influencing educators' attitudes towards inclusive education of ethnic minority students.

3.4 Experiences

A number of studies have identified teaching experience as a significant variable in shaping teacher attitudes toward inclusion. Moreover, teaching experiences and related effects vary quite widely, depending on different time periods, subjects and levels.

3.4.1 Period

Leyser et al. (1994) reported that, overall, teachers with experience of learners with special education needs had more favourable attitudes with respect to inclusion than teachers with little or no experience. Findings from other studies undertaken in the US (Leyser and Lessen, 1985), Australia (Harvey, 1985) and the UK (Shimman, 1990) have also highlighted the need to increase experience and social contact with such children. This should be achieved in tandem with training in specific skills in instructional and class management, in the development of positive attitudes towards inclusive education.

However, it has also been found that younger teachers are more supportive of integration, as are educators with fewer years of experience (Clough and Lindsay, 1991). These findings match those of Forlin (1995), who reported that acceptance was highest for teachers with fewer than six years experience and was significantly lower for those with six to ten years of teaching experience. The least accepting group comprised those teachers with more than 11 years of teaching. The clear implication is that as educators gain more experience of teaching, the less likely they are to accept inclusive education.

In a similar vein, Leyser et al. (1994) reported that teachers with up to 14 years' experience more positive attitudes towards integration than teachers with more than 14 years. The teachers grouped by experience between one to four years, five to nine years and ten to 14 years exhibited similar attitudes to integration.

Similarly, Harvey (1985) found that more experienced primary teachers were comparatively unwilling, with respect to the less experienced teacher trainees, to accept integration. Overall, then, it seems reasonable to assume that newly

qualified educators are more positive in their attitudes towards inclusive education than their more experienced colleagues.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that some researchers have reported no significant relationship between teaching experience and teachers' attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000; Leyser, Volkan and Ilan, 1989; Rogers, 1987).

3.4.2 Subject and Level

A number of studies have investigated the relationship between subjects and grade level taught and the attitudes of teachers with respect to inclusive education. An international study by Leyser et al. (1994) reported that senior secondary teachers were more positive towards inclusion than junior secondary and primary school teachers. Further, junior secondary teachers displayed more positive attitudes than primary school teachers.

However, Thousand and Rosenberg (2005) acknowledge that "structuring inclusive education experiences is more difficult with adolescents in secondary school settings" (p.164). This perception aligns with Savage and Wienke's review (1989), which included the finding that as learners' age increases, teachers tend to become less positive towards integration. The presumption with respect to this conclusion is that teachers of older learners are more concerned with subject-matter than with individual learner differences. Moreover, "the secondary schools in which students are included will retain the same organizational structures and curricular and instructional practices" (Thousand and Rosenberg, 2005:164).

3.5 Communication and Interaction

Forlin's (1995) study also revealed that educators who were involved in policy development and application were more positive towards inclusion than uninvolved teachers. Social contact was found to produce unfavourable attitudes and lack of acceptance in some teachers, attributed to the stress factor in classroom management. When teachers work with students and parents, they actively make sense of these communications and interactions; meaning is given to what they experience.

Similarly, parents and students make active sense of their communications and interactions with teachers. In other words, ideas of social constructivism are assumed in interactions between teachers, students and parents. Such ideas also arise from socio-cultural psychology, which looks at human beings as active participants in the world (Todd, 2007).

On the other hand, language, as the principal vehicle for communication, "might manifest itself through using a language which universalizes experience and ignores the difference between people and cultures" (Solar, 2005:183). Moreover, those who study language use in home and schools have suggested that recitation-type lessons in school may be incompatible with the discourse patterns of certain minority group families. This discontinuity, in turn, may contribute to the lower achievement and higher dropout rate among ethnic minority students (Gutierrez, 2002; Lee, 1995).

3.5.1 Parents

There have been various studies of parent attitudes and behaviour over the last 40 years with respect to schools and education (Todd, 2007). Considering communication and interaction with students' parents, one under-articulated aspect is the lack of homogeneity of parents. All parents are different, and general assumptions should not be too readily made about the perspectives or actions of parents. 'Parent' is a term well used but rarely thought about with respect to its meaning. This has important implications for teachers, as some parents may be contacted, some may be consulted, some fight for and get what they want, and others may be ignored. "If the individual perspectives of different parents are not recognized, then home-school relationships may be diminished" (Todd, 2007:72).

There is a preponderance of texts showing how increased involvement of parents in their own learning positively impacts on the engagement of their children in learning (Cummings et al., 2004; Moran et al., 2004; Quinton, 2004; Dyson and Robson, 1999; Macbeth, 1993).

However, "ethnicity is one of the most under-acknowledged factors disadvantaging parents in home-school relations" (Todd, 2007:73). Crozier and Davies (2007), based on the results of a study concerning the perspectives of home school partnership of parents who are of different ethnic minorities living in areas in the north-east England, argue that many schools represent spaces of exclusion and are not sufficiently welcoming to the ethnic minority parents where few of them have a voice.

3.5.2 Students

As for communication and interaction with ethnic minority students, a local survey (Ku et al., 2005) revealed that more than one-quarter of the 200 ethnic minority students who responded felt that the teachers in their school disliked them and cared more about Chinese students than the non-Chinese students. They felt that, in their class, teachers attended to Chinese students more quickly, left ethnic minority students waiting longer before answering their questions, and punished Chinese students less severely than ethnic minority students. Some students expressed that teachers stereotyped them as useless, badly behaved, and/or impolite. (Ku et al., 2005)

Regarding the interaction between Chinese students and ethnic minority students, nearly half of the latter reported that they seldom communicated with Chinese schoolmates. The ethnic minority students intimated that the lack of communication was a result of cultural differences and language barriers. This arises because most Chinese students in Hong Kong are unfamiliar with the religious and cultural practices of ethnic minority students. Not surprisingly, this can lead to misunderstanding among groups of students and lead to difficulties in making friends (Ku et al., 2005).

3.6 Teacher Education and Training

Another factor which has been the focus of a number of studies is the effect of teacher education and training, which is believed to be an important contributor

towards improving educators' attitudes with respect to inclusive education. A coherent plan for teacher training is considered essential in attempting to integrate ethnic minority students into the mainstream.

A study by Dickens-Smith (1995) considered the attitudes of teachers with respect to inclusion. The respondents took part in a survey of their attitudes pre- and post-staff development training. Respondents reported more positive attitudes about inclusion after in-service programmes than before their training, with teachers of regular classes exhibiting the strongest favourable change in attitude. The researcher (Dickens-Smith, 1995) came to the conclusion that a key to successful inclusive education is staff development.

Intercultural competence is not usually included in teacher education in most countries, including Hong Kong. The issue is both political and of concern for teacher education institutions with respect to the nature and content of their curricula. Ethnic-cultural diversity should be part of the curriculum, so that teachers can critically reflect on the issue with respect to their professional agency, and educators should be trained in a variety of approaches to intercultural teaching (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2003).

The learning outcomes of all students in a school are the responsibility of teachers , who should understand the reality of ethnic identity in a person's life, and be aware of the need for well-being (Leeman & Volman, 2001). The curriculum that teachers develop and implement must be interculturally inclusive, and based on ethnic-culturally responsive pedagogy (Leeman & Ledoux, 2003). This requires teachers to engage in high levels of reflection with respect to their own racial identity (Carter and Goodwin, 1994). These researchers focus on ethnic identity,

while other researchers include ethnic-cultural identity in a broader and thus more complex understanding of the concept of social-cultural diversity (Ladson-Billings, 1999). The common belief of the researchers is that a competent teacher is a reflective teacher.

A number of authors have posited that competence in intercultural education should be integral to what it means to be a professional teacher. Various researchers (Cochran-Smith, 2000; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 1999; Leeman & Ledoux, 2003; Villegas & Lucas, 2002) propound this enhanced professionalism, exhorting teachers to be willing and able to reflect on the relationship between different facets of this professionalism with respect to the economic, social, cultural and political aspects of teaching. Education should be removed from the often rigid structures within the classroom and considered in the broader social context.

Ideally, educators should be reflective practitioners who consider the social and political implications of their actions. Attitudes and emotions are involved; teachers need to reflect on their identity, attitudes and political orientation with respect to multicultural society (Leeman and Ledoux, 2003). According to the 'Handbook to Accompany the Standards for the Award of Qualified Teacher Status and Requirements for the Provision of Initial Teacher Training', published by the UK's Teacher Training Agency (2001),

> *"All teachers are required to consider inclusion principles and practices through the detailed statutory guidance provided in the national curriculum which makes inclusion an underlying principle for education rather than a limited set of practices associated with particular children. The guidance for initial teacher education is similarly explicit. Teachers are asked to adopt some of the elements of a pedagogy for diversity by promoting active learning and independent learning strategies which enable pupils to think for*

themselves and to plan and manage their own learning". (Teacher Training Agency, 2001:93)

"They are to be prepared so that they create a classroom environment, which reflects the cultural and linguistic diversity of the class and of society and prepares pupils for living in a diverse and increasingly interdependent society. The measures they need to take include presenting positive images of the achievements of all groups and flexible grouping strategies which give pupils opportunities to experience working cooperatively with peers from diverse backgrounds and with different needs." (Teacher Training Agency, 2001:110-111)

However, there are barriers to putting such advice into practice. Within teacher education there may be pressure to fulfil a crowded curriculum, which can lead to didactic teaching styles. The advice may also conflict with other aspects of government policy which encourage attainment grouping, whole-class teaching and an approach to the curriculum in which the absorption of a canon of facts may be given priority over active learning. Further, although a significant pedagogical change identified was the need to tailor the curriculum to suit the diverse learning needs of ethnic minority students, teachers often lack the skills necessary to tailor the formalized curriculum (Yuen, 2004). Yuen (2004) also argues that in terms of the intercultural competency of teachers, changing attitudes from a negative bias to a more positive and fair one deserves greater attention.

3.7 Challenges

There are common challenges faced by teachers relating to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students: availability of resources and guidelines, the priority of

vision and mission from policy to implementation, culture conflict and other support, each of which will now be discussed.

3.7.1 Insufficient Resources and Missing Guidelines

On 27 February 2008, Mr. John Tsang, Financial Secretary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, pledged the following support in response to the needs of ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, when delivering the annual budget speech to the Legislative Council.

> *"Though a predominantly Chinese society, Hong Kong has quite a number of ethnic minorities who are valued members of our community. ... ... Some members of ethnic minorities, however, are disadvantaged because of their education level, language barriers, lack of social networks, and other causes."* (HKSARG, 2008:43)
>
> *He proposed to "grant a recurrent annual allowance of HK$300,000 (UK$19,400), starting from the 2008-09 school year, to 19 designated primary and secondary schools (Appendix III) to help them implement the School-based Support Scheme for non-Chinese speaking students, and to suitably increase the allowance granted to such 'designated schools' with a higher intake of non-Chinese speaking students. ... ... We will also seek to increase the number of these schools to 25 within two school years. It is estimated that full implementation of these proposals will entail an additional provision of HK$13 million (UK$841,400) a year."* (HKSARG, 2008:43-44)

From the above, we can see that the HKSAR government pledged to provide additional financial support to ethnic minorities for their education and services. However, details of the School-based Support Scheme for the ethnic minority students have yet been clearly stated. Specifically, there are over 500

non-designated primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong, enrolling Non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students. The number of such schools has increased by 65 per cent over the past two years. A total of 19 of these schools enroll over 30 NCS students, who comprise from 3.5 per cent to 80 per cent of total number of students in their schools. However, these non-designated schools are not eligible to receive any of the above-mentioned grant to implement any School-based Support Scheme for their NCS students.

3.7.2 Priority of Vision and Mission

The vision statements of most schools highlight that each student is valued as an individual, and the mission of a school is usually to help fulfill all students' potential. "Although an inclusive approach clearly supports this aim, there are major tensions between inclusive and competitive philosophies both in the government and in schools. Government advocates inclusive education but simultaneously expects schools to achieve increasingly high academic targets." (Gerschel, 2003:55)

The practice of schools is influenced by government pressures to raise standards and to achieve targets set in literacy, in order to be assigned to a better position in the school banding system. In some schools, considerable resources are provided for students whose performance falls just short of achieving the desired target. The pressure on schools to set targets and to raise standards may negatively affect the admission and inclusion of students whose academic performance will not prove sufficiently competitive (Gillborn, 2001).

3.7.3 Culture Conflict

If our society and schools reach shared values and achievements, they will be in a position to progress. It may thus be helpful to revisit government guidance to schools concerning the need to meet the ethnic minority students' needs effectively in school settings that are educationally and individually inclusive. However, the reality is quite complex (Fergusson & Duffield, 2003).

Cultural conflict arises when local teachers do not understand the cultures of ethnic minority students and therefore misinterpret their behaviour. This can lead them to impose sanctions more frequently or more harshly on ethnic minority students, leading to conflict and disaffection within the school (Ku et al., 2005). Ethnic minority students in Hong Kong society are deemed to suffer from low self-esteem, especially when the curriculum does not reflect their cultures and interests (Yuen, 2004).

Closely allied to cultural conflict, local teachers and students often do not understand the learning styles of ethnic minority students, and thus the learning experiences of ethnic minority students are negatively affected (Fordham, 1996). There is also the argument that ethnic minority students and parents are aware that the job market does not operate in their favour, and so they may see little point in putting a lot of effort into academic work (Ogbu, 1988).

3.8 Forms of Support

Fundamentally, inclusive education recognises the differences between students. Acknowledgement of difference can lead to significant change in what goes on in schools, including classrooms, playgrounds, staffrooms, and in relationships with parents. Support has in the past been thought of as simply making available additional staff or students to work with particular learners. This may at times be necessary, but is certainly not sufficient: a wider idea of support is required, one which applies to all activities, thus increasing the school's capacity to embrace student diversity. Increasing student participation involves more than the provision of additional support for individuals (Booth, 2002).

It is clear that the Hong Kong Government is committed to the principle of inclusive education and is determined to achieve positive changes for ethnic minority students. Nor can there be any doubt about the relevance of most of the targets that the Government has set or concerning the significant funding that has been allocated to reach them. What is still in question is the extent to which the changes will improve the quality of inclusive education. This in turn depends to a large extent on the ways in which the Government, schools, teachers, and communities respond to the challenges and opportunities that are now available (Mittler, 2000).

Support should also be provided for teachers in lesson planning, to ensure that lessons cater for all students. The range of starting points needs to be recognised, along with differences in learning styles and background experiences. A benefit for both learner and teacher is that the need for individual support is significantly lessened when learning activities are developed which promote the engagement of

all learners. At the same time, effective individual support can serve to promote active, independent learning, and ultimately contribute to improvement in learning for the whole student cohort (Booth, 2002).

3.8.1 Policy Level

An effective policy framework on the inclusive education of ethnic minority students can guide the implementation of inclusive education in practice. To achieve such a policy framework, the following existing barriers to inclusive education need to be removed:

- *"Multiple and conflicting perspectives on inclusive education*
- *Lack of coordination of overlapping inclusive education strands*
- *Persisting special educational needs response to educational difficulties*
- *Attention to narrow outcomes and targets rather than good conditions for teaching and learning*
- *A technicist, instrumental view of educational policies that obscures the role of values in action*
- *Excessive accountability and the erosion of trust*
- *Promotion of competition between schools*
- *Increasing selection within and between schools*
- *Fragmentation of the education system"* (Ainscow et al., 2006: 32)

3.8.2 School Level

The interpretation of the policy framework at school level may lead to other issues. For example, as intimated in the above list, some government education policies contain potential tensions and contradictions. Further, it is not just about the

school, as schools should forge links with parents and the local community. It is simplistic to focus on schools also without simultaneously exploring ways in which schools can work with families and local communities (Mittler, 2000).

The foundation of school-based initiatives should be the realistic needs of the school as a whole. The result of such initiatives must be increases in the learning outcomes of all students, including ethnic minority students. To ensure such success, the school is responsible for the professional training and development of all members of staff. As a starting point, each member of staff should be encouraged to identify his or her own portfolio of training needs, based on his or her priorities (Brighouse and Woods, 1999). According to Tilstone (2003:222),

> *"Taking into account each teacher's individual portfolio, it is important that all teachers discussions take place on the identification of agreed priority needs for whole-school development. Such priorities will naturally be reflected in the school's development plan, and may centre upon such issues as multi-culture and ethnics at the same time be subject specific."*

Other suggested development activities include peer support group of teachers, as proposed by Charlton (1998). Typically, members of the group suggest possible solutions that may or may not tried out, with results reported back to the next meeting. Such meetings may be encouraged and supported by school management, but they are intended as a bottom-up initiative under the control of members of the group, who take it in turns to chair the sessions and take any further action on behalf of the group as a whole (Mittler, 2000). A similar arrangement was adopted within the very different school settings in Hong Kong (McBrayer and McBrayer, 1999).

3.9 Concluding Remarks

There is general agreement in the reviewed literature that, to ensure successful implementation of inclusive education, policy-led and school-based changes to the curriculum are required. This includes teaching materials, approaches to teaching; the attitudes and behaviour of teachers; and the goals, norms, and culture of the school.

A theoretical framework has been built for successful inclusive education, in terms of understanding the perceptions and experiences of teachers concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students, the challenges they have faced during the implementation and the perceived forms of supports at both policy and school levels needed.

CHAPTER 4: STUDY DESIGN

This chapter comprises two principal sections. The first section outlines the key features of qualitative research and the reasons why it was identified as consistent with the research objectives and questions of this study. The second section describes the application of qualitative research to this study. This includes discussion of critical dimensions of the study such as sampling method, research instruments, ethical considerations and data analysis.

4.1 Research Method

A qualitative approach with in-depth interviews was selected to address the following research questions:

- What are the experiences of teachers concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What are the perceptions of teachers concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What are the challenges faced by the teachers in relation to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong?
- What forms of support are perceived to be needed by teachers to support the inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system?

A qualitative approach is especially applicable to research in contexts that have not yet received much attention, where previous research has left significant omissions, and where a fresh viewpoint can help to detect areas for intervention in

practice (Schreiber & Stern, 2001). This readily applies this study, as the focus of this research is not to identify and test hypotheses, but to consider the perceptions of teachers and the challenges they are facing in relation to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, and to investigate how to better include ethnic minority students within Hong Kong's education system from the teachers' perspectives.

In terms of the relationship between research questions and research method, a qualitative approach starts from necessarily vague initial questions and allows a framework to emerge from the data. Qualitative approaches place considerable importance on the contextual setting. Gathering detailed knowledge of the context and the daily events in a particular context, as discussed in chapter 2, are important dimensions in this study. As Taylor and Bogdan (1998:7-8) put it, the aim is to develop "concepts, insights, and understandings from patterns in the data rather than collecting data to assess preconceived models, hypotheses, or theories".

A qualitative approach usually develops practical rather than formal or grand theory. If theory aligns with the day-to-day reality of the substantive context and sympathetically generated data, then it will match that substantive context. As it aligns with reality, it will most likely be understandable and seem sensible to those who are studied and to the persons practicing in that context. Further, when the induced data are complete and the interpretation conceptually broad, then the framework will include enough flexibility and variability to apply it to a range of areas related to that context under investigation (Law & McLeod, 2004).

The emphasis in qualitative work is on the interpretation of description, in an

attempt to answer the question 'What is going on here?' by analysis of viewpoints from a variety of sources and perspectives. This goal to present a coherent description of a claimed reality can be reached in many ways, so that qualitative research becomes a craft, depending on the aesthetic, moral and professional standards held by researcher (Van Maanen, 1983). Specific techniques employed by qualitative researchers include participant observation, interviewing, case studies, archival data collection, historical analysis, diary methods and conversational analysis.

The result of qualitative study must be credible, and procedures used to enhance the credibility of qualitative study (Owens, 1982) include:

- prolonged data-gathering on site — plenty of time is essential for the researcher to dispose of predispositions, and progress from initial impressions through to a deeper level of understanding.

- triangulation — a number of sources are used and cross-checked for verification, accuracy and the testing of perceptions. This tended to be a minor facet of my work. However, elements of triangulation emerged particularly from cross-checking across participants and comparisons with previous studies and reports.

- member checks — data is continuously corroborated with participants or others involved in the events being studied, basically to ensure credibility. Participants were the main source of member checks in this study. For example, all interview transcripts were sent to the participants for their checking and corroboration.

- collection of referential adequacy materials — materials relevant to the site or events under study can be collected. Such materials were readily at hand for this study in the form of government reports and statistics.

- development of thick description — materials and information gathered should be synthesised, integrated and related in order to make the description real and vivid for the reader. A continual sorting, sifting, choosing, categorising and re-ordering of material from the interviews resulted in the 'thick description' found in this thesis.

- engage in peer consultation — ideas and progress should be discussed with qualified peers, to check thinking, raise questions and concerns, and talk through problems. The presence of a supervisor for this project ensured the use of peer consultation, along with discussions (to a lesser extent) with work colleagues.

Further, Eisner (1991) claims that:

> "qualitative inquiry works best if researchers remain aware of the emerging configurations and make appropriate adjustments accordingly. A pre-formulated plan of procedure indifferent to emerging conditions is the surest path to disaster.
>
> Flexibility, adjustment, and iterativity are three hallmarks of qualitative 'method'. Even aims may change in the course of inquiry, depending what happens in a situation. Such an attitude toward method is diametrically opposed to the aspiration to bring everything under control so that effects can be unambiguously explained." (Eisner, 1991:170)

Eisner further posits that there are six features of qualitative studies. The first is that they are field focused; that is, the qualitative researcher is interested in what is

going on, and a qualitative study is usually non-manipulative. As Eisner explains, "On the whole ... qualitative researchers observe, interview, record, describe, interpret, and appraise settings as they are" (Eisner, 1991: 33).

Qualitative researchers also use the self as an instrument. This refers to the way that the researcher "engages the situation and makes sense of it" (Eisner, 1991:34), that is, their perceptive and interpretive abilities. The researcher doesn't approach data gathering 'clipboard in hand', but is able to perceive important behaviour and interpret its significance — 'the ability to see what counts'. The other side of this feature is that the researcher can be so much inculcated into the culture that they might miss important behaviour by being too close. The problem has also been called 'fighting familiarity' by Delamont (1992:40), who discussed the issue in terms of a researcher failing to suspend commonsense assumptions, merely 'thinking as usual' and subsequently failing to 'see' what was going on. Peer consultation can be an effective way of overcoming this danger.

Eisner's third feature of qualitative study is its interpretive character, both in terms of explaining why something takes place and what it means for those involved. That is, qualitative researchers "try to *account for* what they have given an *account of*" (Eisner, 1991:35), and attempt to probe the motives of actions they've described. The explanations may require the application of constructs from the social sciences, or the creation of new theory.

The interpretation also involves the issue of meaning, especially in terms of the motives and the quality of experience of those participating in the study. How does a teacher react when their suggestions are not acted on? What might prompt them to take a stand on an issue? What gives them satisfaction in their work?

Again, conceptual tools can assist with the interpretation of meaning, but other inputs must also be used, such as the historical antecedents of a context.

Fourthly, qualitative study involves the use of expressive language and the inclusion of voice in text — as Eisner (1991, p. 36) explains,

> "The kind of detachment that some journals prize — the neutralization of voice, the aversion to metaphor and to adjectives, the absence of first person singular — is seldom a feature of qualitative studies."

It is also related to efforts to remove falsity, to move away from the illusion of pure objectivity in social science research. This has meant an explicit effort to 'personalise' the writing in this thesis, in the effort to use language that will engage the reader, seek their empathy (as well as showing my own) and promote their understanding of the people and situations being studied and analysed. The reader should be assisted by the quality of the writing and the use of the expressive voice to experience the situation.

Attention to particulars, in an effort to allow readers to feel the distinctive characteristics of a case, is the fifth feature identified by Eisner. At the same time, carefully chosen particulars are used to exemplify, in order to locate them in a general theme.

The sixth distinctive feature of qualitative study is its criteria for judgment — coherence, insight and instrumental utility. This is a recognition that all approaches to research are in essence a matter of persuasion. The 'facts' of qualitative research seldom speak for themselves. It is up to the researcher to build a reasonable case through insightful reasoning and persuasion.

Given this, what is the test of qualitative research that makes it believable? Three features of a qualitative narrative, are identified as paramount:

- coherence — the 'tightness' or quality of the argument, whether it 'rings true'. Is the narrative consistent and logical? Are there claims or connections that 'just don't fit'? This feature is closely related to structural corroboration (Eisner, 1986) and triangulation.

- consensus — the extent to which readers of the narrative concur with the analyses and interpretations. It is a matter of agreement, obtained by persuasion and argument.

- instrumental utility — basically usefulness, leading to understanding, enlightenment and anticipation (in terms of guides for the future, rather than prediction).

It is this third feature that Eisner perceives as the most important test of a qualitative study.

Allied to these concerns are arguments related to credibility and validity, and Eisner raises similar points to some of those discussed at the end of the previous section. He also introduces the idea of referential adequacy, the "extent to which a reader is able to locate in [the educational criticism's] subject matter the qualities the critic addresses and the meanings he or she ascribes to them" (Eisner, 1991:114). In this sense the research is keenly empirical, in the perception and interpretation of the qualities present in the study. Through the referential adequacy of the narrative, we "are able to see what [we] would have missed without the critic's observations" (Eisner, 1991:114).

More recent considerations of qualitative methodology (such as debates over subjectivity and objectivity) have introduced the related notion of 'reflexivity', focusing on "the ways in which a researcher's involvement with a particular study influences, acts upon and informs such research" (Nightingale and Cromby, 1999:228). The previous discussion of credibility (especially with respect to member checks and peer consultation) has clear relevance and application to reflexivity (Willig, 2001). Essentially, by adopting a reflexive stance, the researcher remains aware of potential threats to credibility, such as unwarranted assumptions, and uses quality checks such as member checks to maintain the quality and integrity of the analysis and interpretations.

The usefulness of qualitative accounts is also an issue that must be faced by those adhering to such methods. In other words, what lessons can we learn from a qualitative narrative? How does the notion of generalisation apply to qualitative research in general, and this project in particular?

Bruner (1973) explained generalising as going beyond the information given: it also involves the transfer (leading to the concept of 'transferability') of what has been gleaned from one situation to another (Eisner, 1991). Generalisation is thus closely related to learning, in that learning requires transfer to have occurred. The statistical generalisation that takes place in most quantitative study can thus be seen as a more specific or special case of a general process. In such study, the use of random selection enables formal inference. Other ways by which inference is made (Eisner, 1991) include:

- attribute analysis — an image of the characteristics of something is used to identify their presence in our experience; and

- image matching — we store generalised images, which help us to find something by matching a pattern we see with an image we have remembered.

Our contact with the qualitative world is thus a vital source of personal generalisation. In addition, we learn or generalise through the illumination provided by others in art, literature and common culture. As Eisner contends,

> "We listen to story tellers and learn about how things were, and we use what we have been told to make decisions about what will be. ... We see the film *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and understand a bit more about how people survive in an institution that is hell-bent on their domestication. All of these narratives are potentially rich sources of generalization; all contribute significantly to our lesson learning. All are, in a sense, one-shot case studies." (Eisner, 1991:202)

The generalisations that emerge from qualitative study thus differ from statistical generalization — the logic is softer, making it more like analogy. Readers of a qualitative research study will generalise in the sense that they

> "determine whether the research findings fit the situation in which they work. The researcher might say something like this: 'This is what I did and this is what I think it means. Does it have any bearing on your situation? If it does and if your situation is troublesome or problematic, how did it get that way and what can be done to improve it?'" (Eisner, 1991:204)

Eisner (1991) also uses the term retrospective generalisation, referring to the process by which we view our past experience in a new sense when we come into contact with or formulate an idea that changes our perceptions. In this way, our past is reconstructed by such new ideas — the reconstruction of experience that Dewey regarded as powerful in learning.

> "Once a Darwinian idea emerges, for example, the past never appears the same. Nor does the future. We have acquired a new perspective for making sense. When we make sense of experience we already have, the generalization can be regarded as retrospective." (Eisner, 1991:207)

Eisner concludes his consideration of the issue of generalisation by reminding us of its limits, thus clearly stating the erroneous nature of many prescriptive research conclusions. His approach can thus be described as a contingency perspective.

> "Generalizations in education, whether produced through statistical studies or through case studies, need to be treated as tentative guides, as ideas to be considered, not as prescriptions to follow. 'It all depends' is probably the most useful qualifier to attach to answers about the efficacy of particular educational methods." (Eisner, 1991:209)

So, the spirit of Eisner's approach implies that to know if inclusive education is useful, we need to know how teaching and learning approaches in inclusive education are applied. To know what the effect of inclusive education is, its strength and weaknesses, we need to know what teachers are doing, and to inform others what we have perceived in a manner that is insightful and meaningful. That is a basic aim of this thesis, which can be achieved through the judicious and rigorous application of the principles of qualitative research developed over the past few decades.

4.2 Sampling

Probability sampling is both common and suited to quantitative research, as each person in a population has a non-zero, specific probability of inclusion in the

sample. Qualitative research, however, more often uses and is better served by non-probability sampling (Merriam, 1998). Practical considerations also intervene. In this study, a complete list of persons in the overall teacher population was not available, making probability sampling an impossibility. Further, probability sampling does not serve the purpose of this study, as its purpose is in testing or verifying ongoing theory and to infer the degree to which a relationship between variables holds true within a specific population. Contrasting with this, qualitative research is not usually concerned with defining specific variables and their relationships. Thus, in this study, the aim of the sampling was to identify and categorise issues and themes through analysis of the data. These categories and themes were then tested as to their applicability by further sampling with additional cases (Finch, 2002).

4.2.1 Locating Participants

If a researcher chooses to use a random sample to prevent bias, exactly the opposite can occur: bias may be introduced by not attending to the meaningful scope of the phenomenon. Thus, sampling in qualitative inquiry must be purposeful, with participants invited into the study according to their knowledge of the topic being researched, or the type of information that is needed to complete or to complement existing understanding. This type of required knowledge differs according to the stage of inquiry, whether new categories are emerging in the data set, or whether the researcher is seeking to saturate or to verify the categories. Thus, excellent qualitative inquiry is inherently biased. By biased, it means it has been deliberately sought and selected. This bias is

essential if the research is going to result in useful outcomes and is not something that impairs the rigor of the research. Qualitative sampling should always include processes of purposeful and theoretical selection according to specific parameters identified in the study, rather than processes of random selection (Morse, 2006).

A suitable research participant must have experience; they must be willing to participate, and have the time to share the necessary information; and they must be reflective, willing, and able to speak articulately about the experience. Not all of the teachers who volunteered to take part in this study had all of the characteristics of an excellent participant. In other words, the researcher selected teachers to interview who had or were having the experience in which the researcher was interested. As shown in Table 3, the experiences of participants in teaching ethnic minority students ranged from 1 year to 12 years, with 5.75 years being the average.

Quantitative research assumes that all potential subjects in the population will know about, or have an opinion about, the research topic, and therefore a sample selected randomly will provide useful data from a sample that is representative of the general population. Were this quantitative perspective to be used in a qualitative study, the researcher would wrongly select their sample according to demographic criteria such as gender and/or age, rather than the conceptual or informational needs of the study.

Moreover, resultant data may be inappropriate or of no use. If demography is the sole criterion, the researcher is likely to invite participants with no knowledge of the topic into the study. This means that from some of the participants the

researcher may get no data, or very poor information. Because qualitative researchers use a relatively small sample, and data are expensive to process, the researcher cannot afford in terms of time and research budget to tolerate poor participants. It is accepted, though, that this might not always be true, as it is also difficult to be precisely sure which participants are appropriate at the outset. There may be new things to learn from a variation in experience. However, in view of the background and objectives of this study and its associated research questions, it is appropriate for the researcher to select only teachers who have experience in teaching ethnic minority students for interview, as they are able to share first-person experience and make practical recommendations.

4.2.2 Sampling Steps

In this study, the processes of data collection and analysis were not separated, but conducted concurrently. The sampling therefore had to be appropriate to ensure that both data collection and techniques of analytical conceptualization were rigorous. Useful data are obtained through careful sampling. Sampling schemes changed dynamically with the progress and development of the research. This study used the following main types of sampling methods: purposeful sampling, snowball sampling and theoretical sampling.

4.2.2.1 Purposeful Sampling

Non-probability sampling in qualitative study often begins by recruiting participants solely based on whether they have experience of the research topic in

question. The most obvious way to locate such participants is to go to where they are most likely to be located. Potential participants were firstly invited on the basis of accessibility, with the researcher recruiting intentionally/purposefully from wherever these people may be or wherever they may gather. This method of sampling was used early in the study to identify the scope, major components, and trajectory of the overall process. The first task of the researcher is to obtain an overview of the overall process. The phenomenon needs scoping, to determine the dimensions and boundaries, as well as the trajectory of the project (Richards & Morse, 2007). First, the researcher used convenience sampling to locate available teachers who had experience of teaching ethnic minority students. Identifying the appropriate participant group is crucial.

The researcher went to the most obvious places and the most likely informants in search of information. Initial invitations were distributed to the two-week inclusive education classes organized by the Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government between September and October 2008. The teachers who attended the classes had teaching experience with ethnic minority students in their schools were invited. Participants 1, 2, 3, 4 and 8 were selected through purposeful sampling.

4.2.2.2 Snowball Sampling

After the preliminary purposeful sampling, snowball sampling was used. In this case, the researcher requested introductions from the initial participants to invite their friends, who were teachers with experience in teaching ethnic minority students, to join the study. Initially, the snowball sample participantss were

selected to maximize variation of meaning, thus determining the scope of the phenomena and key concepts. Patton (1990) argues that snowball sampling has the power to enable the selection of information-rich cases, which add depth to the study. Participants 5-7 and 9-15 were selected through snowball sampling.

4.2.2.3 Theoretical Sampling

As concepts identified and the framework started to develop, further participants were incorporated in order to strengthen the findings. This approach is known as theoretical sampling (Goulding, 2002). The main principle of theoretical sampling is that the emerging categories, and the researcher's increasing understanding of the developing theory, direct the sampling (Glaser, 1978). Theoretical sampling implies that the researcher decides who or what to sample next, based on prior data gathered from the same research project in order to make comparisons with previous findings. The participants were asked to supplement information about linkages between two categories, hence contributing to the emerging framework (Charmaz, 2006). Participants 16-20 were sampled through theoretical sampling to serve the above purpose.

4.2.3 Sample Size

"Most methodology authors advise learners that saturation is reached when the researcher hears nothing new" (Stern, 2007:117). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), when applying purposeful and theoretical sampling, the sample size cannot be decided in advance: "The criterion invoked to determine when to stop

sampling is informational redundancy, not a statistical confidence level" (p.203). Informational redundancy occurs when data collection continues until no additional information emanates from freshly-sampled participants (Merriam, 1998). Seidman (1998) explains that "'Enough' is an interactive reflection of every step of the interview process and different for every study and each researcher" (p.48). That point is normally determined by the discovery that additional interviews are yielding so little new information that more interviews would be a waste of time. Therefore, the researcher interviewed the teachers until the point of information redundancy was reached. Glaser (2001) describes this as the point of "theoretical saturation" (p.192). The logic of this study is concerned with in-depth understanding of teachers' perspectives, not to make overall generalizations about how many teachers have problems with inclusive education of ethnic minority students, but to understand how teachers experience in the context. A range of categories emerged with relatively sparse data, and it seemed likely that additional data collection would generate further insight. The originally planned ten interviews were then increased to twenty as the study progressed, and this resulted in further data collection.

4.2.3.1 Representative Rather Than Excessive

Simply collecting more and more data is of course a fruitless exercise, and more bad data does not make good data. To keep sampling and hoping that the data will improve with quantity is not a productive strategy. If a sampling strategy is not working, is not yielding the kinds of participants that one needs in order to get good data, then change the strategy. A qualitative approach is flexible and

permits the researcher to discard unproductive strategies and adopt new ways of sampling.

"The sample needs to be representative, but it's unnecessary and perhaps defeating to collect huge amount of data." (Stern, 2007:117) In spite of the availability of computer programs, such as the NVivo8 used for this study, to assist in placing data in the best possible position to aid the researcher and facilitate the management of qualitative data such as sorting, the true essence of qualitative analysis is based in investigator-insight. Therefore, collecting too much data may result in a state of conceptual blindness for the researcher.

Nevertheless, Patton (1990) believes that a minimum sample size should be specified, on the basis of anticipated satisfactory coverage of the topic under investigation, given the aims of the study. Therefore, the researcher chose a number based on what had been found adequate in previous personal work in other projects, knowing that the number could be corrected later if necessary. At the beginning, the researcher estimated that ten interviews with the teachers who had relevant teaching experience would be adequate. However, it was eventually found that ten more interviews were required to reach saturation of the categories.

4.3 Research Instrument

Interviews which facilitated the gathering of extensive qualitative data seemed particularly suitable for this study. Qualitative methods were judged most useful for exploring data and developing concepts, especially as quantitative methods tend

to require pre-conceptualization of the data (Finch, 2002; Glaser, 2003; Lee, 2002). The issues investigated in this study were not available through existing collections of quantitative data. The investigative questions concerned extraction of meaning (in particular, the meaning of "inclusive education") and the telling of stories concerning teaching experience. Other relevant issues included the complex and ever-changing world of educational policy, schooling arrangement, curriculum design, and so on, all of which may impact on the challenge being faced by the teachers with respect to inclusive education in Hong Kong.

It is accepted that many researchers investigating teachers' perceptions about the education of ethnic minority students have applied Likert-scale inventories to find whether respondents agree or disagree with given notions of inclusive education. As such, most previous studies have focussed on acceptance/rejection concerning established categories, with little attempt to uncover the beliefs that might underpin specific perceptions. Further, the potential deficiency of such research is that they assume that the participants' responses actually reflect their behaviour. Given that inclusion and inclusive education are fairly recent ideas, participants may simply give socially desirable responses that bear little resemblance to their actual teaching behaviour. This may be influenced by norms of political correctness. Teachers might agree with a statement favouring the inclusion of ethnic minority students in mainstream classrooms, but this does not address the issue of how they behave or adapt their teaching when faced with a specific group in their own class. Principally for this reason, it was decided to interview the teachers, and not simply rely on the use of questionnaires. During the interview, basic conceptual questions can be asked at the first stage to allow participants to reflect on their understanding of inclusive education and related issues, and then critically

evaluate their own teaching behaviour with respect to their acceptance or otherwise of the issues.

Moreover, information concerning personal experiences and perceptions of ethnic minorities has been recognized in Hong Kong as particularly sensitive and confidential, especially after the implementation of the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) on 18 July 2008. For this reason, individual interviewing, with the additional assurance of confidentiality, was the method chosen to collect data for this research, rather than the use of focus groups.

4.3.1 Interview Process

The research interviews took place using an informal approach, underpinned by a semi-structured interview format. This allowed any participant to bring up questions of importance that occurred to them during the process, and gave the interviewer the flexibility to adapt the format, depending on the responses and specific perceptions of the teacher. The teachers could and did also raise questions concerning the research or the researcher. The interview process was thus interactive, allowing the flavour of a conversation, with the flexible interview format designed to facilitate such a flow of information in both directions (Hirschfeld 1997; Oakley 1995). This flexibility thus allowed each interviewed teacher to shape, to a degree, both the issues discussed and the pattern of their individual interview. It is thus appropriate that the interviewed teachers in the study are defined as 'participants', rather than 'subjects' or 'interviewees', which are associated with more passive characterizations.

The interview process was based on a format developed from acquaintance with previous studies concerning educators' perceptions and exposure to teaching inclusively, especially with ethnic minority students. The interview schedule consisted of three main sections. First, the participants were asked about their demographic background, mostly focusing on teaching experience, teacher training, subject and level taught, teaching approach, major role in school, involvement in teaching ethnic minority students, and so on. This discussion was initiated with the following questions. Further details can be found in Appendix VII.

- *How long is your teaching experience, including in other schools?*
- *How long have you been teaching in this school?*
- *What are the subjects and level you are teaching?*
- *How many ethnic minority students are in your class and school?*
- *What are your approaches to teaching?*
- *Is there any difference in your approach to teaching local and ethnic minority students?*
- *How long has your school been receiving ethnic minority students?*
- *What is your involvement in teaching ethnic minority students in the school?*
- *Were you involved in teaching ethnic minority students before teaching in this school? If yes, for how long? Can you share with me some more details?*

The interviews thus served to identify particular experience that teachers might perceive as of relevance to this investigation. By focusing on particular incidents, the objective was to build a picture of how such teaching experiences revealed the reality of the teachers' lives and the effects of their teacher training, subject and

level taught, teaching approach, major role in school, involvements in teaching ethnic minority students, and so on.

The second section of the interview focussed on clarifying the teachers' accounts. This might take the form of asking why the participant exhibited a particular action during a particular event. The initial aim was to ensure that the participant was comfortable with the interview process, emphasizing that the questions were not seeking 'right' or 'wrong' responses, and that they were free to raise issues or add anything they deemed relevant. Further, given their experience with inclusive education, the research concerned an issue with which they were familiar and knowledgeable. Specific questions during this part of the interview included:

- *Can you share with me any good and/or bad teaching/contact experiences with ethnic minority students in your school?*
- *How do you think your teaching experience with ethnic minority students affects your perception of inclusive education?*
- *Are there any other factors you think would affect the teachers' perception toward inclusive education of ethnic minority students? And how do they affect it?*
- *Do you face any challenges in supporting inclusive education of ethnic minority students in your school? What are they?*
- *Did you take any training and/or education on inclusive education of ethnic minority students? Or have you been taking any? Or do you have any intention to take a related training/course soon?*
- *How do you think the training and education can help teachers support inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*
- *What roles do you think the teacher and the school should play in supporting inclusive education – please say why you think this - can you give examples etc.?*
- *Can you share with me your personal views on the issues*

surrounding inclusive education of ethnic minority students?

- *An inclusive ethos – or effective learning and teaching and high achievement?*

The third part of the interview focused more specifically on their recommended educational support and services to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system. Again, the aim was to let issues emerge in the conversation that they believed were important and for the teachers to explain what action they believed was required. Examples of interview questions include:

- *What do you think are the main barriers against the ethnic minority students to learning and participation? Do you have any recommendations to minimize the barriers in your school?*
- *Are there regular opportunities for you and your colleagues to share and discuss their practical strategies?*
- *Do you and your colleagues work together to develop a common philosophy on inclusive education and to consider the actions which will ensure it is put into effect?*
- *What practical action can you personally take to work with colleagues in developing inclusion?*
- *What steps could the school take to create the conditions for a real community of belief in inclusive education?*
- *What is your opinion of government policy concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*
- *If you were the in-charge of your school, how would you list and rank at least three educational support and services to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system?*

4.3.2 Pilot Study

The above process was firstly piloted in a set of two interviews in July and August 2008 to test the data collection method and the prepared interview questions. The pilot took place according to the same circumstances planned for the final study, so it was thus useful in testing the interview schedule. It also provided the researcher with further practice and skill development in interviewing and transcription. The Education Bureau of the HKSAR Government organized regular inclusive education two-week course for in-service teachers of primary and secondary mainstream schools in Hong Kong. A concise preliminary 'invitation to respond' questionnaire was delivered to two classes within this course to identify potential participant teachers and confirm their willingness to be interviewed. The information of the two classes was as follows:

- Class 1 : 21/7-1/8/2008 – 50 In-service teachers
- Class 2 : 4-15/8/2008 – 25 In-service teachers

Four teachers with experience in teaching ethnic minority students expressed their willingness to be interviewed. One teacher from each class was invited to do the in-depth interview, which lasted around one hour for each session.

Initial analysis of the pilot confirmed that the format allowed and promoted an open conversation that resulted in rich, although complex, data of relevance to participant's teaching experience and their attempts to improve inclusive education. Given the open nature of the discussion, it transpired that it was not necessary to ask every question, not pose them in the scheduled order, as many were raised in general conversation. This outcome did not mean that changes to the interview schedule were necessary, but did serve as a reminder that participants require plenty

of time to carefully consider their responses and not to be rushed through a list of questions.

4.3.3 Interview Location

All interviews took place at locations and times which suited the participants. While a few teachers strongly preferred to meet somewhere 'neutral', others were happy to be interviewed at school or in the researcher's office. Interviews were thus held at workplaces, cafes, restaurants, or the office. These arrangements did not cause any significant difficulties in conducting the interviews, as the environment of all locations was quiet enough to communicate effectively and take records for transcription.

4.3.4 Interview Schedule

As with the pilot study, the preliminary 'invitation to respond' questionnaires were delivered to classes of the inclusive education course organized by the Education Bureau, in order to identify the teachers relevant to this study and confirm their willingness to be interviewed. Between September 2008 to January 2009, 20 individual in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers who had teaching experience with ethnic minority students. Five teachers from each of the four mentioned types, including designated primary and secondary schools, and non-designated primary and secondary schools, were interviewed. The interviews were conducted and transcribed in Chinese for data analysis, and finally translated into English for this thesis. All transcriptions were completed as soon after the

interview as possible. With the consent of the teachers, all interviews were recorded, with the sessions lasting between one and two hours. The timing of the conversations was governed by the participant's desire to talk. Overall, the teachers displayed great willingness to articulate their experiences at school. They outlined their aspirations concerning their teaching and professional development, and explained their individual beliefs concerning the future of inclusive education. The effect of parental expectation was also covered, as well as the level of respect they held in the school. The interviews ranged more widely into such matters as the need for and effectiveness of teacher development in inclusive education and, lastly, comments were offered on government, education and school polices in Hong Kong. Overall, the interview method allowed the researcher to gain a mutual understanding with teachers of the issues they faced in inclusive education. Details of the qualitative outcomes and analysis are found in Chapters 5 & 6: 'Findings and Discussion' and Chapter 7: 'Conclusions'.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

According to the Economic & Social Research Council (ESRC), "research ethics [refers to] the moral principles guiding research, from its inception through to completion and publication of results and beyond – for example, the [duration] of data and physical samples after the research has been published" (ESRC, 2006). For this study, informed consent was sought to establish a trusting environment within which the participants were confident to discuss their attitudes and behaviour. In the study, the teachers were explained its aims and any associated

potential risks for them with respect to participation. Furthermore, the researcher explained how the confidentiality and identity of participants and the collected data from them would be protected. The above ethical issues were also mentioned in the interviews and stated in the introduction letter (refer to Appendix VI).

4.4.1 Informed Consent

In addition, consent for voice recording was sought before starting the interview. The participants had the right to terminate the voice recording at any time during the interview process. The participants also had the right to obtain a copy of their individual voice records, though they needed to express such a request immediately after the interview, as the voice records would be destroyed after transcription. The transcribed records were kept anonymous with assigned codes. The code sheet was encrypted with a password in a computer and was scheduled for destruction a year after the study was completed. An informed consent form, which addressed the mentioned concerns, was provided and the participants were asked whether they were willing to sign before starting the interview (refer to Appendix VI).

4.4.2 Confidentiality

For this study, the ability to maintain participant confidentiality was the prime ethical issue. During the interview process, there might be some negative stereotypes and assumptions used by the teachers. The following quotes can be taken as some examples in illustrating what sensitive issues and power dynamics

were mentioned during the interview:

> *"In fact, most of the school circulars are written in Chinese and translated into English for the ethnic minority students and their parents. School social workers and teachers cooperate to translate those circulars and sometimes the assignment instructions. Although the parents don't mind the academic performance of their children but they are concerned about any unequal punishment on their children and communicate with the school actively and frequently."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

> *"The ethnic minority students don't obey the classroom discipline. Their parents never discipline their children ... ... Moreover, they don't care about the academic performance of their children."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

> *"In my school, most parents of ethnic minority students have no time to take care their children and they may walk around at the street and be easily misled by some triad society members to committee illegal action."*
>
> *(Participant 16, 7 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

> *"The ethnic minority students don't have much sense to obey the norm of classroom. They feel free to walk around the classroom during a lesson. And their behaviour may affect the local students who want to learn."*
>
> *(Participant 19, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

Clearly at least some participants felt that confidentiality would be respected to the extent that they felt comfortable to make what would be interpreted as rather inflammatory and/or unsubstantiated remarks concerning ethnic minority families. Therefore, the need to obtain high quality, informative and relevant information from the participants was matched by the concurrent need to make sure that no

specific information could be matched with an individual participant. For practical reasons, personal particulars were needed in the study; interviews could not be arranged without them, and the participants would need to be contacted after interview to verify and possible amend the transcript. To ensure confidentiality, a non-identifiable code was assigned to each transcript, with a hard copy master list held in a locked cupboard in the researcher's office. Within each transcript, any information which might potentially identify a participant was amended to prevent such identification, whilst maintaining the essential meaning of the interview. Moreover, quotations used in presentation have been kept anonymous by assigning numbers to each participant, i.e. participant 1, participant 2 and so on. Any quotation reflecting the identity of a participant was also avoided. Confidentiality of the teachers during the process of the study was thus protected.

4.5 Data Analysis

As mentioned, the in-depth interviews were conducted and transcribed in Chinese for data analysis, and finally translated into English in this report. The 20 interview transcripts yielded approximately 300 pages comprising 200,000 Chinese words. This made up the data set for the study, which was organized and analysed through the use of NVivo8 software, developed with the specific aim of facilitating qualitative data analysis.

4.5.1 Iterative Process

Analysis of the data was an iterative process. It commenced immediately after participant 1 was interviewed. The recording was transcribed, and after multiple readings to identify relevant issues and experiences, a start was made on coding. This pattern was repeated for a number of subsequent interviews, with transcription and initial analysis prior to a subsequent interview taking place. This process became untenable at about half-way, however, due to the scheduling requirements of the participants. So for a time some interviews were conducted while previous interviews were still being transcribed. Overall, though, the iterative nature of the collection and analysis was maintained.

4.5.2 Coding

Coding has been described as "the process of defining what the data is about" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:605). Merriam (1998) explains the coding process as the choice of a shorthand word, phrase or number that is assigned to a specifically identified section of data, so that similar data elements can be easily located during analysis. Three varying approaches to coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) were applied; open coding, axial coding and selective coding.

- "Open coding: identifying, naming, categorizing and describing instances found within the interview transcripts, field notes from observations, or other documents. The researcher actually reads each line and determines "What exactly does it mean?"
- Axial coding: the process of relating codes (categories and properties) to each other, via a combination of inductive and deductive thinking. To simplify this process, the researcher

emphasizes causal relationships by fitting things into a basic frame of generic relationships.

- Selective coding: process of choosing one category to be the core category, and relating all other categories to that category. The essential idea is to develop a single storyline around which everything else is draped." (Borgatti, 1997)

Open coding was used to generate themes and categories through study of the transcript data. Categories were developed for emerging themes, such as by identifying all the comments made by participants about communication with the parents of ethnic minority students. At this stage no priority is assigned to the categories, nor are relationships between them defined (Dey 1999; Finch 2002; Glaser 1992; Miles & Huberman 1994).

Merriam (1998) recommends that interview transcripts should be analyzed by locating similarity among experiences. This is aligned with the process of axial coding, where a researcher combines inductive and deductive reasoning to relate codes and categories. With the occurrence of experiences discovered, the researcher then decides under which code each determined occurrence will be located. This process leads to the development of categories.

A framework for the coding was developed, with broad themes (perception, experiences, challenges and recommended forms of support) identified as tree nodes providing alignment with the interview questions, as well as some less structured free nodes. NVivo uses two concurrent types of code: 'trees' and 'free' nodes, which are either amalgamated or separated, depending on the outcomes of the analysis as it unfolds. That is, 'tree' nodes serve to connect related issues or topics and typically aligned with the questions in the interview

schedule, while 'free' nodes develop from emerging concepts or newly-discovered categories.

The researcher's application of a simple tree and free node structure led to the further development of 'child' nodes, reflecting the emergence of additional themes and issues. This was another iterative process, the outcome of which was a more complex and finely-tuned analytical framework. The framework also allowed the use of characteristics, such as different teaching experiences, to be drawn from background data and incorporate them into the analysis. This further enabled and facilitated searches and refinement of the framework through a focus on the views of sub-groups with common background characteristics.

4.5.3 Memoing

Memoing is a second, concurrent operation within qualitative data analysis, and begins at the start of the analysis, alongside and in parallel with coding. During the coding process, all sorts of ideas are likely to occur. These ideas become the stuff of memos, which record the ideas for later consideration and possible inclusion in the overall analysis. The memos can cover many topics or issues, and can relate to theory, methodology or simply personal reflection. Especially when theory-based, a memo may point to alternative or more substantive concepts than those emerging from the codes. This can lead to new or alternative patterns of meaning or association, reflecting more sophisticated pattern coding. Memos can lead to elaboration or clarification of a concept, and reveal relationships among ideas.

Taken together, coding and memoing provided the building blocks for the qualitative data analysis of this study. For example, the following quote it was eventually coded under the sub-category 'home school partnership', but it might also have been coded under the category 'communication and interaction'.

> *"One of the ways to improve the efficiency of the assistance given by the teachers and students is the cooperation and contribution from the parents. Even if the parents may not agree the expectation set by the school on the students or their children. There should be a chance for the school to explain the standpoint of school. At the same time, there should also be a chance for the parents to express their concerns on their children and expectations on the children and schools. Home school partnership doesn't necessary only mean close cooperation between the school and parents. More regular communication is also a form of partnership. For example, at the regular meetings, the school can recommend the parents to allow their children to watch local TV programmes at home to improve their Chinese language, explain the advantages of recommendation and the implementation details. The final decision will be still on the parents. However, it would be fairer to all parties with such communication opportunity."*
>
> *(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

The use of memoing favoured an interpretation of the quote that placed it in the category of recommended form of support at school level, due to its power in interpretation and support of the category. The researcher interpreted most of the points as recommendations.

4.5.4 Categorizing

The use of categories in the analytical process has already been mentioned. Their development depends on the skills of the researcher to interpret and conceptualise

the data (Dey 1999). The analysis progresses by a process of grouping the categories in a coherent and justifiable way with respect to emerging issues and themes. Within the interview transcripts, a code was assigned to a specified sentence or paragraph (a 'text unit') relating to a particular expressed viewpoint. When another text unit revealed the same viewpoint, it was assigned the same code. Analysis of the codes then led to the development of patterns of categories and themes, resulting in an analytical framework. As the analysis progressed, the framework evolved through a series of iterations, reflecting new and emerging categories, sub-categories and their interrelationships. This also led to the renaming, rearrangement and expansion of themes.

Glaser (1992) recommends that data should "be closely examined and compared for similarities and differences, while constantly asking of the data the neutral question "What category or property of a category does this incident indicate?" (Glaser 1992:39). This advice was heeded during the analytical process, along with the fundamental belief that categorizing is "the analytic step in selecting certain codes as having overriding significance or abstracting common themes and patterns in several codes into an analytic concept" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007:604). This further recognizes that development of categories should be 'data driven' (Lee 2002:794-5; Richards & Richards 1995:80), focusing on what the participants perceive and say concerning their experiences of inclusive education, rather than any preconceived notions or even the preconceived questions.

Categorization thus helped the researcher to elevate the conceptual power of the analysis from mere description to an increasingly more abstract, theoretical level. The researcher was then able to more clearly define the properties of each theme and category, the conditions under which they were operative, the conditions under

which they changed, and their relation to other categories and sub-categories.

4.6 Concluding Remark

In this study, data collection and analysis were simultaneous processes, with the developing analytical framework being used as feedback and guiding the ongoing collection of data. Theoretical concepts resulted from iterative processes of going back and forth between progressively focused data and successively more abstract categorizations of them. The original broad research questions underwent refinement and clearer definition through the coding (from open to theoretical and selective) and categorization process. The process is transformative, forcing the researcher to make essential decisions concerning categories, including which ones on which to focus and, more importantly, their specific meaning (Suddaby, 2006: 638). The researcher then focused on subjecting the most significant categories to further analysis and raising them to concepts within the framework. During the process of organizing the multitude of ideas which emerged from analysis of the data, the researcher acted as an interpreter searching for meaningful elements, or text units. Once elements were identified and absorbed, the researcher chose appropriate categories and corresponding codes to assist in sorting and organizing the data. This led to the further identification of patterns and themes, and the resultant overall framework.

It is recognized that not all of the teacher stories are equal in value, with some providing better illustrations or descriptions than other stories (Morse 2003). As

is common to all qualitative inquiry, the researcher did not treat all data equally. In the process of examining transcribed data, the researcher might disregard some text as not helpful or irrelevant, apply some portions of the text for verification of other interviews, use some of the text or stories in the data to add to the descriptions provided by other participants, or add new data that was different and might start a new category. This is not a source of bias but an acceptance that all data were not equal. At the same time, the researcher made use of the process of reflexivity, through which he recognized, examined and understood how his social background and assumptions could intervene in the research process. It is because "the researcher is a product of his society and its structures and institutions just as much as researched. Our beliefs, backgrounds, and feelings are part of the process of knowledge construction. It is imperative for the researcher to be aware of his positionality" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006:141).

CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION – PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCES

This and the following chapter present the results of the study, including quotations from the interview transcripts that provide supporting evidence for the analytical framework. In order to maintain the clarity of the discussion and findings, some of the quotes were edited, with every effort made to maintain the essence of their meaning.

5.1 Profile of Participants

The recruitment process of participants aimed at finding a sample comprised of a diverse group of participants to enable efficient and effective data collection. Two types of data were sought: common experiences among participants and enlightening case studies (Morse 1994). Investigating areas that were both common to participants and diverse within the population made selection of this approach to sampling appropriate.

In the context of Hong Kong, as discussed in the literature review chapter, fundamental dimensions of diversity were discussed which can affect teachers' experience, perception and recommendations. Five dimensions of diversity were introduced: teaching experience; teaching experience with ethnic minority students; inclusive education training; school type; and school level. These identified areas of diversity are non-exclusive.

Table 3: Profile of Participants

Participants	Teaching experience (Years)	Experience in Teaching Ethnic Minority Students (Years)	Designated / Mainstream Schools	Primary / Secondary Schools	Took Inclusive Education Training
1	4	4	Mainstream	Primary	Yes (SEN)
2	6	6	Mainstream	Secondary	Yes (SEN)
3	3	3	Mainstream	Primary	Yes (SEN)
4	12	12	Mainstream	Primary	Yes (SEN)
5	1	1	Mainstream	Secondary	No
6	2	2	Designated	Primary	No
7	1	1	Mainstream	Secondary	No
8	10	10	Mainstream	Primary	Yes (SEN)
9	9	9	Designated	Primary	No
10	10	10	Mainstream	Secondary	No
11	5	2	Designated	Secondary	No
12	5	5	Mainstream	Secondary	No
13	4	4	Mainstream	Primary	No
14	27	5	Designated	Primary	No
15	4	4	Mainstream	Primary	No
16	7	7	Designated	Secondary	No
17	20	8	Mainstream	Primary	No
18	8	8	Mainstream	Secondary	No
19	13	5	Mainstream	Primary	No
20	22	9	Mainstream	Secondary	No

Eventually, twenty individual in-depth interviews were conducted with teachers who had teaching experience with ethnic minority students. Teachers from the four types of schools, designated primary and secondary schools, and non-designated primary and secondary schools, were interviewed. Three quarters were teaching in mainstream schools, and one quarter teaching in designated schools. Over half (65%) were teaching in primary schools, with the remaining 35 per cent in secondary schools. A quarter of the teachers had experienced inclusive

education training organized by the EDB.

5.2 Achieved Analytical Framework

After coding the collected interview data, an analytical framework of teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong consisting of themes, categories, and sub-categories was designed. The framework was revised and the categories were re-arranged several times in order to reflect a comprehensive coverage of all the various views expressed during the interviews with teachers.

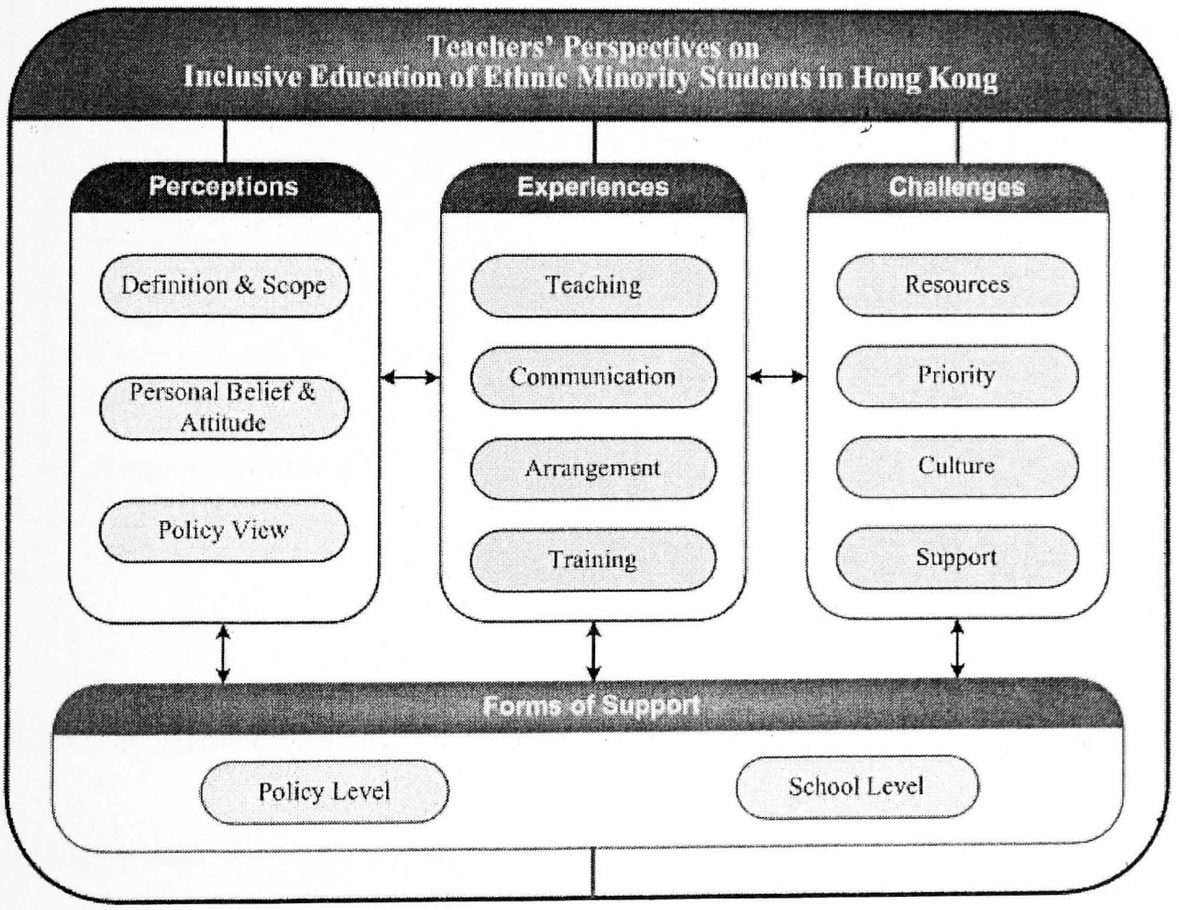
As shown in Chart 2 below, the framework consists of four main themes: Perceptions, Experiences, Challenges and recommended Forms of Support. Depending on the depth and breadth of details provided by respondents, the themes were further broken down to the category and sub-category levels.

Essentially, the logic of the framework is that teachers in Hong Kong have a range of perspectives of inclusive education, based on their individual perceptions, which are in turn shaped by their experiences. These perceptions and experiences allow them to identify a number of challenges facing inclusive education in general and the teaching of ethnic minority students in particular.

Given this level of understanding of inclusive education, teachers find themselves in a position to make what they believe are informed recommendations with respect to the forms of support that are needed to improve the education of ethnic

minorities in Hong Kong. Furthermore, it is a two-way process, as indicated by the double-headed arrows in the framework chart. This means, for example, that teacher perceptions influence recommended forms of support and, conversely, existing forms of support can affect teacher perceptions. Similarly, the accumulation of experience introduces the participants to fresh challenges, just as challenges themselves add to the teachers' experience. More details of the analytical framework are found in Appendix X.

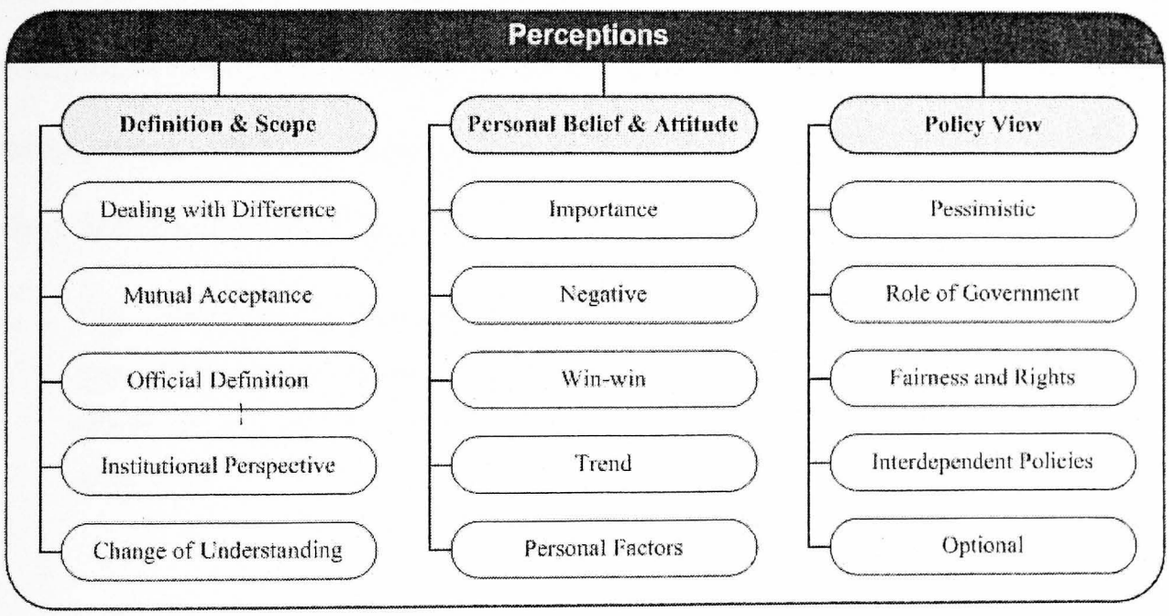
Chart 2: Framework of Teachers' Perspectives on Inclusive Education of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong



5.3 Perception

After coding the collected interview data, the theme of Perception was shown to consist of three categories: Definition & Scope, Personal Belief & Attitude, and Policy View. For each category, three sub-categories were identified, as shown in Chart 3: dealing with difference, mutual acceptance, official definition, institutional perspective and change of understanding.

Chart 3: Perception Theme



5.3.1 Definition and Scope

Inclusive education can encompass a variety of domains according to different levels of understanding. These can range from initiatives that embrace the total school environment to those concerned with specific aspects, such as curriculum reform, teacher training, textbook selection, or student behaviour modification (Banks, 2006). When a clear definition of inclusive education is lacking, the way

in which teachers implement it will vary, depending on their understanding of the concept. According to the collected feedback from interviews, most of the participants had definite ideas about inclusive education, although they did not provide a consistent definition. The participants' range of views on the meaning of inclusive education will now be discussed.

5.3.1.1 Dealing with Difference

Some definitions expressed by the participants, no matter with or without inclusive education training, focus on human interaction. Like Forest and Pearpoint (1992), they see inclusion as a way of dealing with difference. They perceive that education should provide an inclusive school environment to address the educational needs of all students.

> *"My understanding is that inclusive education is to allow the students with special educational needs to study in mainstream schools. Some positive effects are expected to come out through the interaction among the students of all kinds."*
>
> *(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"I think different students have different learning needs, personal characteristics and abilities. ... inclusive education does not only include the students with disability, but also for all students from different ethnicities."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

Moreover, most believed that students from different ethnic groups should be included in inclusive education.

> *"I think inclusive education ... should include the ethnic minority students. I believe the scope of inclusive education is very broad."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school*

with IE training)

"I think inclusive education include both SEN students, NCS students and ethnic minority students."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

"Inclusive education is to include all kinds of students, no matter from different ethnicities, under the same education system."

(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

As typical comments from participants, these viewpoints illustrate the general consensus shown with respect to the implementation of inclusive education in dealing with difference.

5.3.1.2 Mutual Acceptance

Some participants perceived that the spirit of mutual respect and acceptance was the core concept of inclusive education.

"Inclusive education of ethnic minority students is about the education of mutual respect and/or acceptance on the cultures and life styles among different ethnics."

(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

"I believe as long as the teachers can accept the ethnic minority students, they can cater the educational needs of ethnic minority students as the same as that of local students. ... if they don't feel being rejected but our acceptance, inclusive education of them is not too difficult."

(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)

5.3.1.3 *Existence of Official Definition*

Few participants expressed reliance on the official definition. It is noted that the official definition of inclusive education in Hong Kong does not include ethnic minority students.

> *"Some teachers have no idea on what inclusive education is or misunderstand it."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"As far as what I searched from the website of Education Bureau and other related documents, I couldn't find that inclusive education includes the ethnic minority students."*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

The existence of an official definition, with its perceived deficiencies, did thus not emerge as an issue of any consequence to participants.

5.3.1.4 *Institutional Perspective*

Some participants adopted an institutional perspective. Along the lines of recommendations from researchers such as Ballard (1995), Clark et al. (1995), and Rouse and Florian (1996), they relied on organizational arrangements and school improvement to guide them with respect to the scope of inclusive education.

> *"I learnt about the concept of inclusive education when I was taking teacher training programme. At that time, the message about the inclusive education of ethnic minority students was not obvious. It seemed to me that the concern of inclusive education was mainly for the SEN students."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

> *"Before teaching at this school, I didn't know inclusive education included*

the ethnic minority students."

(Participant 19, 5 year TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

These quotes, in the light of the previous comments, reveal the more pragmatic viewpoints of participants, whose focus on what it meant for them in their teaching career.

5.3.1.5 Change of Understanding

Most participants admitted to a change of understanding about inclusive education and its implementation in the last few years.

"Before teaching at this school, I didn't know there were ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. In the last decade, my school has been enrolling more and more ethnic minority students. Moreover, more and more mainstream schools are willing to enroll them now. And I find more related trainings have been available for teachers to learn how to manage inclusive classroom, which I didn't find before."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

There were also some changes of the participants' perceptions of ethnic minority students over the last few years. Typically, such changes were from negative to positive after increased interaction with and understanding of the ethnic minority students.

"Before teaching the ethnic minority students, I felt they are dirty. After teaching and contacting them more frequently, I find this is only an individual hygiene issue and can be improved through related education. My perception to them has changed. At the same time, I feel they are very friendly."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Again, the effect of experience modified attitudes and behaviour of participants, revealing at least a measure of openness with respect to cultural issues. This finding for teachers matches the earlier research finding that the more that Hong Kong people interacted with ethnic minorities, the more positive their attitudes became (Chan & Wong, 2005).

5.3.2 Personal Belief and Attitude

Personal belief and attitude is a category focused on the feasibility of the success of inclusive education of ethnic minority students. Teachers' beliefs about their mission in dealing with the needs of excluded students influences not only their reported attitudes towards inclusive education, but their teaching practice in inclusive classrooms (Jordan, Lindsay & Stanovich, 1997; Soodak, Podell & Lehman, 1998; Stanovich & Jordan, 1998; Yuen, 2004; Cavusculu, 2006).

5.3.2.1 Importance

Increasing positive attitudes of teachers in inclusive education starts with their dedication to the work to be done (Cavusculu, 2006). Personal belief and attitude is a critical factor to the success of inclusion education. The following views of participants reflect this.

> *"The personal belief and attitude of teachers affect the implementation seriously. Even though they understand the concept of inclusive education, it still can't be implemented efficiently if the teachers reject or do not agree with the idea of inclusive education. They may show their preferences on the students by ethnicity and the students can sense this easily."*

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"With positive attitude and frequent contacts with ethnic minority students through extra-curricular activities, I just took about half a year to establish a good relationship with them and understand the interaction skills, although I still don't know their languages."

(Participant 9, 9 year TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

The participants thus reveal that not only are initial attitudes crucial to successful implementation of inclusive education, but that attitudes can change through successful experience.

5.3.2.2 Negative

Inclusive education requires substantive change that not only influences every aspect of a school and alters the daily professional activities of teachers and administrators, but also challenges their traditional attitudes and beliefs (McLeskey and Waldron, 2000). Some participants believed that the inclusive education of ethnic minority students could not be implemented successfully because of resistance and lack of understanding about inclusive education.

"I agree to the direction of inclusive education of ethnic minority students but I don't think all schools can implement, especially for my school. Some of my colleagues don't accept ethnic minorities and even reject to teach those classes having ethnic minority students. I think if there is no solution to change this situation, the school should not enroll these students. Otherwise, there may be more negative impacts on them."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I think it is quite difficult to implement. There are still some colleagues knowing very little about inclusive education. They may think equal

education opportunity or allowing the students of different ethnics at the same classroom is inclusive education. ... inclusive education is a very high level concept. It is very difficult to achieve a complete inclusive situation."

(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

The limits of the previously-mentioned positive outputs are thus revealed by other participants, mostly through their negative perceptions of other teachers. It also reveals a resonance with a discriminatory attitude displayed by some Hong Kong people (Chan & Wong, 2005).

5.3.2.3 Win-win

Some participants expressed positive opinions that inclusion education could help create a win-win situation for both local and ethnic minority groups because they could learn from each other.

"Through the inclusive education with ethnic minority students, the local students can understand them more and this is good for the inclusion of ethnic minority groups in the future."

(Participant 14, 5 years TEEMS in designated primary school with IE training)

5.3.2.4 Trend

Some participants did not express either positive nor negative opinions with respect to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students, but perceived it as an unavoidable trend due to changes in the population structure of Hong Kong.

"I think there is a trend of inclusive education of ethnic minority students, especially for my school district. It is because there are more and more

ethnic minorities moving to live in this district. Therefore, I agree with my school to have a policy to enroll more of their children."

(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

Inclusion of different ethnicities in a society is unavoidable because of globalization, and therefore we should learn how to accept other ethnic groups through inclusion education.

"I think it is very important to guide the local students to accept and respect the ethnic minority students. Hong Kong is an international city in a globalised economy. There are many chances for us to interact with other ethnic groups. We should be open mind and able to change the perspectives to accept others from different regions, cultures and/or ethnics. The first step to internalize this mind set is through the inclusive education of ethnic minority students."

(Participant 20, 9 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

As exemplified by this comment, acceptance of the inevitable trend was in general couched positively by participants.

5.3.2.5 Personal Factors

Teachers' attitudes can be influenced by many interrelated factors. A significant amount of research regarding teacher characteristics has endeavoured to determine the relationship between those characteristics and attitudes. For example, the childhood experiences of a participant can positively affect their attitude.

"I think my belief is much related to my background because I was being discriminated during my junior school study in Hong Kong. I came from Mainland China, although not from foreign country. I don't want the others to experience what I experienced before. Inclusive education of ethnic

minority students is very important."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Moreover, the aspirations of a teacher with respect to career development is also a contributing factor.

"I think if a teacher is taking the teaching job as his/her life-long career, he/she must need to accept inclusive education, as this is unavoidable."

(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

The empathy displayed by the participant in the first quote above, along with the need for acceptance recommended by the second resonate with the theme of adaptation found in earlier research (Unison Hong Kong, 2001).

5.3.3 Policy View

Most participants did not think the policy of inclusive education of ethnic minority students was highly supported nor strongly promoted by the Hong Kong Government or EDB.

5.3.3.1 Pessimistic

Most participants were pessimistic about the implementation of inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, in terms of planning, promotion, implementation and timing.

"I think it is still not a good time to implement the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students. There is no well-rounded plan and consensus in the society to accept such policy. The teachers in mainstream schools don't

feel good in implementing such policy. They bear a heavy psychological burden, as they feel lost in teaching and helpless. Due to insufficient support, they find they can't help those ethnic minority students, even if they really want to."

(Participant 14, 5 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Another reason making participants feel pessimistic was that some schools abused the policy for other purposes at the school level.

"I feel that the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students is abused by the school to avoid being forced to close due to the low enrollment rate."

(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Moreover, the examination-oriented and academic performance-based culture in Hong Kong is deemed to be highly incompatible with the implementation of inclusive education.

"I think inclusive education of ethnic minority students won't be achieved in Hong Kong, as there is still an examination-oriented and academic performance-based education system."

(Participant 18, 8 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

So, despite the years of policy development and implementation undertaken by the Hong Kong SAR Government, as detailed in Chapter 2, a significant proportion of participants were skeptical in terms of both its aims and its effectiveness.

5.3.3.2 Role of Government

Further to the above, most participants thought that the Government did not play a key role in promoting and implementing the policy, especially at the school level.

"I think the government and education policy plays the most critical role in promoting the inclusive education of ethnic minority students. However, the current policy is not obvious."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I feel that the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students is not obvious. Many inclusive education trainings offered by the EDB is about teaching the SEN students and none for teaching ethnic minority students in mainstream school."

(Participant 8, 10 year TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I don't find any inclusive education policy for the ethnic minority students implemented by the government. Only some supportive services for non-Chinese speaking students are offered by the government and EDB. Although most of the teachers understand that those services are actually for ethnic minority students, the purposes and objectives of services are not clear."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school with IE training)

At the same time, the issue of inclusive education with ethnic minority student was not placed at the top priority in the agenda of government policy making.

"Comparing with the issue of small class and teaching language policy, inclusive education of ethnic minority students is not obvious and also not the important item to be discussed in the agenda of the government, schools and teachers."

(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

There was participant worry that the Government could not manage to implement the policy in the long term.

"I hope this is not a temporary policy or a policy of a specific official. Sometimes, I feel that the education policies in Hong Kong have been changed frequently because the top officials in EDB have been changed frequently."

(Participant 10, 10 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school

without IE training)

So, aligned with skepticism, many participants displayed little confidence in the Hong Kong SAR Government and its ability to develop and implement effective policy.

5.3.3.3 Fairness and Right

Some participants raised the issue of the fairness of the distribution of social resources. They thought it was the right of ethnic minority students to choose to study in a mainstream school once they became citizens in Hong Kong.

> *"As the ethnic minority students are the citizens here, they should enjoy the right to study in the mainstream schools. And the schools should be well-prepared to serve these students with sufficient resources and support."*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

On the other hand, some participants thought that the low profile of inclusive education policy promotion was not a problem. It supported the ethnic minority students by avoiding public scrutiny of the fairness of resources distribution. Moreover, inclusion can be a kind of natural interaction process.

> *"I think there is no need to have a policy to promote inclusion but a low profile implementation of the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students. The former one may raise the fairness issue against the poor local groups. However, through the interaction between the ethnic minority students and local students in their childhood, they will accept each other by nature."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

5.3.3.4 Interdependent Policies

Some participants expressed their concerns that the inclusive education policy required suitable resource allocation, related teacher training, and other policies to supplement and support its implementation.

> *"I think the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students includes many other policies such as teaching language, class size, curriculum design and adjustment, teacher training, and so on. In other words, huge resources will be required. Without sufficient corresponding educational support services, the promotion of the inclusive education is just a infeasible theory."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

One of the examples used to illustrate the essence of interdependent policies is the 3-3-4 academic system. Since the merging of the two important public examinations into one, most students, including the ethnic minority students, can be promoted to a higher form smoothly. Therefore, inclusive education can be implemented with a longer timeframe.

> *"I think the new 3-3-4 academic system is suitable for the implementation of inclusive education. Without the threshold of achieving good results in the HKCE examination for further study in matriculate forms, students would have longer education period. This implies more chances to implement inclusive education."*
>
> *(Participant 7, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

5.3.3.5 Optional

Some participants did not comment much on the inclusive education policy but expressed their concerns that the implementation of inclusive education policy should be optional.

"I am not sure whether the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students is good or not. Some of them may not want to study with local students, while some of them do. Maybe if there is such policy, there is an option for them."

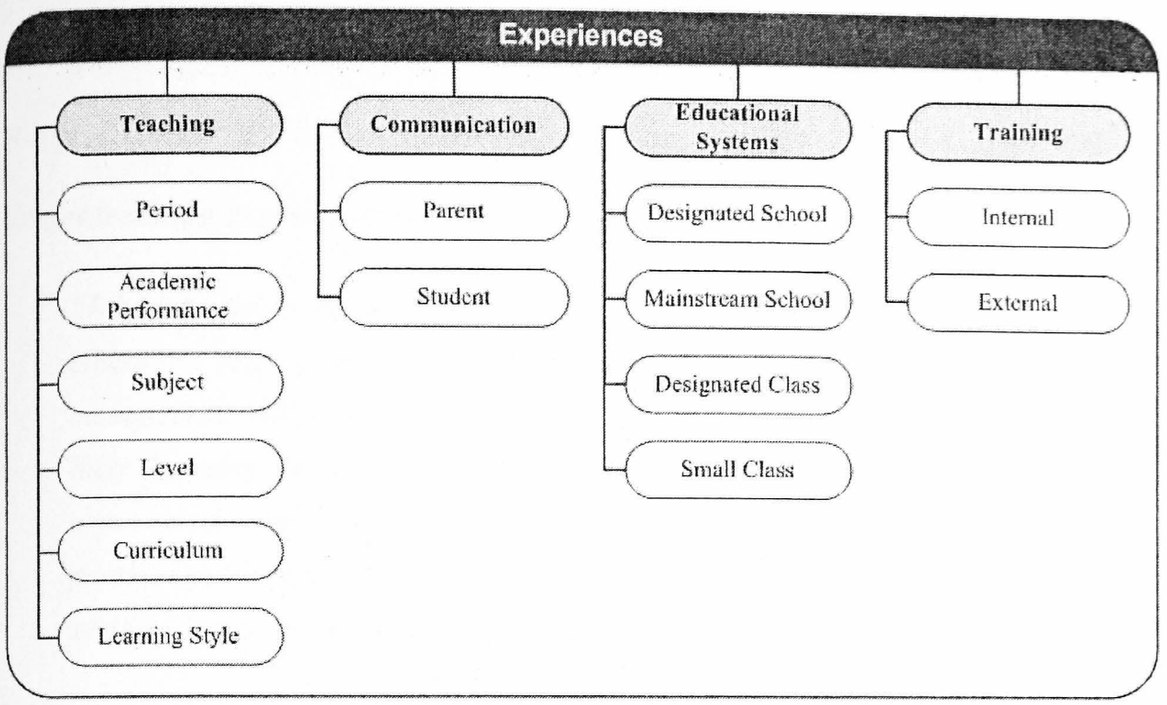
(Participant 16, 7 years TEEMS in designated secondary school with IE training)

So, overall with respect to perceptions, the participants displayed an apparent indifference to official definitions of inclusive education, revealing more interest in what was occurring or was likely to occur at school level. They also perceived that a measure of change with respect to understanding inclusive education was required amongst their colleagues. With respect to beliefs and attitudes, they saw inclusive education as an inevitable trend, while at the same time revealing pessimism and scepticism with respect to the Government's ability at policy level.

5.4 Experiences

After coding the collected interview data, the theme of Experiences was divided into four categories: Teaching, Communication, Arrangement, and Training. For each category, a number of sub-categories were further determined, as shown in Chart 4.

Chart 4: Experiences Theme



5.4.1 Teaching

Teaching experience is cited in several studies as influencing teachers' attitudes to inclusive education. Findings from research undertaken in the USA (Leyser and Lessen, 1985), Australia (Harvey, 1985) and the UK (Shimman, 1990) have also stressed the importance of increased teacher experience and social contact with such students, along with the attainment of knowledge and specific skills in instructional and class management, in the formation of favourable perceptions towards inclusive education.

5.4.1.1 Period

As cited in the literature review chapter, several studies found that younger teachers and those with fewer years of experience were supportive of inclusive education (Clough and Lindsay, 1991; Leyser et al., 1994; Forlin, 1995), while

other investigators reported that teaching experience was not significantly related to teachers' attitudes (Avramidis et al., 2000; Leyser, Volkan and Ilan, 1989; Rogers, 1987). In this study, however, it was found that the participants with longer teaching experience were more supportive of inclusive education.

> *"I had hardship in the first year to teach them. The students in the classroom may come from more than two cultures. The classroom management skill is much different from that of pure local class. Moreover, their learning progress and home support was much contrary to my expectation. After accumulating a year teaching experience, I adjust my psychological expectation, find out more appropriate teaching approach and feel more confidence to teach."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

The participants with longer teaching experiences with ethnic minority students, no matter with or without inclusive education training, also held the same point of view.

> *"I had taught ethnic minority students over 10 years since my graduation. At the beginning, I utilized what I learnt from the teacher education to face the challenges, although there was no such related training during the teacher education. I tried several teaching approaches and classroom management strategies in the last ten years. It may take time to accumulate sufficient experience to face new challenges."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"I think the most critical skill required to accumulate certain period of experience is classroom management. They like to talk and play with other students and walk around in the classroom during a lesson. Such behaviours are not expected of local students. So, it is quite difficult to manage them with other local students in mainstream class."*
>
> *(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

The participants with inclusive education training shared similar views.

> *"I have taught in this school over two years. I had chances to teach ethnic minority students in other mainstream schools before teaching in this school. The teaching experience with ethnic minority students in mainstream is very important because of differences in languages and cultures."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

> *"With the relevant experiences after teaching them, I can set a more realistic expectation on their classroom behaviour and academic performance. I felt very disappointed on their classroom behaviour and academic performance before, as I used the local standard. At the same time, due to their family background and cultures, they also find it difficult to follow the norm of classroom in Hong Kong. Anyway, after three years teaching with them, I feel much easier to interact with the ethnic minority students."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

From the above, it can be concluded that longer teaching experiences with ethnic minority students can help the participants adjust their expectations on the interaction with ethnic minority students, in terms of classroom management and academic performance. This conclusion aligns with the findings of the above-mentioned research from the USA, Australia and the UK.

5.4.1.2 Academic Performance

According to the experiences of participants, the academic performance of ethnic minority students was not up to standard, because of poor family background, lack of family support, insufficient language ability and low motivation in learning. The reasons are basically the same as those attributed to other local low academic achievers.

"Their academic performance is below standard. The situation is worse in secondary schools, as there are more subjects and required to prepare public examinations."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"Basically, the academic performance of most ethnic minority students in this school is bad. Insufficient home support is the key factor. It seems to me that academic performance is not important in their mind. Maybe they don't have long term plan in Hong Kong, as immigration to here is just step-stone to other countries. Maybe they don't think their next generation can have better career opportunity by obtaining qualification. Maybe they have a take-it-for-granted thought that their Chinese should be weak. Such thinking affects the children to have no intention to study harder."

(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

The participants thought that underachievement seemed to happen at an early stage, and that many students could not recover from early failure in basic skills.

"Their foundation knowledge is usually not good. If the problem couldn't be solved during their junior primary, it wouldn't be solved at higher levels of study, especially on language subjects."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"There is not much difference on the academic performances between the ethnic minority students and local students at junior primary level, as they start to learn from closely the same stage. For those who come to Hong Kong at senior primary levels, they could never catch up the progress."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

"I feel that when they find it difficult to follow the learning progress, they will give up immediately and don't ask for assistance from teachers. ... Moreover, I find they lose focus in lesson easily. I guess the language ability is the cause. When they don't know what you teach and find it boring, they will not concentrate on the lesson."

(Participant 5, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

So, though the issue of language is something of a common thread in participants' views on the perceived lack of achievement of ethnic minority students, other related issues were mentioned, including family background and the level at which they start schooling in Hong Kong. These comments resonate with the findings of earlier research, such as Yuen's (2007) study of language barriers.

5.4.1.3 Subject

Nearly all participants expressed that the ethnic minority students had little interest in learning Chinese language, which is a compulsory subject in Hong Kong. Some participants thought the students create the learning barriers themselves, while other participants believed that parents did not support their children in learning Chinese.

> *"Chinese language is the most difficult subject for the ethnic minority students, especially on dictation. They can never have any feeling of achievement after getting zero mark all the time. Sometimes, I feel they make some progress to know some Chinese words. However, the rule of dictation is by mark deduction according to the number of incorrect words."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

> *"They are not participative in Chinese language lessons."*
>
> *(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

To improve the situation in learning Chinese, some participants suggested using a different curriculum to meet the educational needs of ethnic minority students in learning Chinese.

> *"The ethnic minority students need another way to learn Chinese language. The method used for local students is not suitable for them. So, the*

curriculum of Chinese language subject should be adjusted for them. Otherwise, it is too difficult for them to learn Chinese."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

However, insufficient sense of belonging to Hong Kong might be a reason for the ethnic minority students having no interest in learning Chinese.

"Some ethnic minority students don't know whether they will stay in Hong Kong in the future or not. They then have no intention to learn Chinese and establish relationships with other local students."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

With respect to other subjects, some participants found that the ethnic minority students did not perform well in computer subjects, due to poor family background.

"In Computing subjects they are disadvantaged. This may be caused by their poor family background. They can't practice and complete assignments at home without a computer."

(Participant 15, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

Though this was not a common finding, it does align with the earlier point made that the principal difficulties of ethnic minority families (after language barriers), as recorded in the Hong Kong Census, were employment and housing.

5.4.1.4 Level

It was generally agreed that earlier implementation of inclusive education at lower forms would lead to better outcomes of inclusive education.

"I think that the lower the school level to implement inclusive education, the higher the chance of success. The younger the children are, the higher the

chance they can accept other ethnic classmates. Of course, the inclusive education should be implemented at all school levels."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)

5.4.1.5 Curriculum

The school curriculum in Hong Kong has been inflexibly textbook oriented. Schools and teachers either lack the vision or the skills necessary to customize the curriculum to meet their students' educational needs (Yuen, 2004). Although curriculum differentiation and adaptation, in order to deliver the curriculum to all, was seen as essential to make classroom teaching more meaningful and inclusive education effective, nearly all participants shared a concern for maintaining existing academic standards for all students.

"Curriculum adjustment can be done for them. The curriculum can be adjusted to their level and interest them. However, they will need to face the public examination in one day with the local students. The government tells you that the curriculum can be adjusted but all the students will still need to be evaluated by the same assessment for fairness."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"The ethnic minority students can have the sense of achievement and gain self-confidence in the adjusted curriculum. However, this is temporary. To maintain the fairness, not to mention the public examination, they will need to participate in the same final examination with other local students."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

Given the tight timetable and curriculum syllabus, very few participants attempted to tailor the curriculum to the diverse needs of the students and, of those who did, their strategy was to reduce the quantity of curriculum materials. However, some participants felt the result would be a lowering of teachers' expectations of

students and, consequently, a reduction in learning and teaching effectiveness.

> *"The adjusted curriculum is limited by not emphasizing some difficult parts too much. ... I think the curriculum design is not flexible. Frankly, I feel great pity, especially under the rule of marks deduction by mistakes. Even if they make much progress, they may usually get zero mark due to committing certain mistakes which weights hundred marks. They may feel no matter how hard they try, the result will be still the same. I am so sad for them."*
>
> *(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

Some participants indicated that they would like the EDB or HKIEd to offer in-service and pre-service teacher education on curriculum differentiation and the delivery of the curriculum to all students. At the same time, the participants thought the current curriculum did not address the needs of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds and did not focus sufficiently on raising achievement.

> *"The curriculum design of mainstream schools is just for local students and not planned for implementing inclusive education. Moreover, the cultures and histories of South Asian countries are not covered in any subject. This is not good for mutual understanding."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Such views reflect the outcomes of overseas studies, with Caballero, Tikly and Haynes (2007) reporting on the UK that ethnic minorities were generally not included in the curriculum nor the general school environment. Moreover, the Hong Kong language curriculum, which according to the participants' opinion is not at all suited to second-language and second culture users, thus provides a significant barrier with respect to the educational achievements of ethnic minority students.

5.4.1.6 Learning Style

As Fordham (1996) argued, the local teachers and students do not understand the learning styles of ethnic minority students and thus the teaching and learning experiences of ethnic minority students are negatively affected. More than half of the participants observed that the ethnic minority students are more creative and expressive than the local students. The participants found it difficult to deal with the different learning styles of students in the classroom.

> *"I feel the ethnic minority students are more creative than local students... They are out-going and expressive and like to participate in group activities. However, the disadvantage is difficult classroom management. They like to walk around the classroom, play and talk with other classmates during lesson. Maybe it is better if all students in the class are ethnic minority students, as the concern about fairness to local students will disappear."*
>
> *(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school with IE training)*

> *"It is not easy to use our mind set to understand their learning styles. A teaching approach should be investigated by a central unit. By understanding their cultures and family background, there should be a framework of teaching approach which can be adjusted according to the real situation."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school with IE training)*

> *"As they are more creative, out-going and expressive, there should be more activities in lessons such as games and group projects. Their motivation to learn can be increased via their active participation in the activities. The traditional chalk and blackboard teaching approaches are not suitable for them and actually not the trend for the local students too."*
>
> *(Participant 19, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

So, while acknowledging the creative potential of the ethnic minority students, participants found that this clashed with usual classroom management and

accepted behaviour.

5.4.2 Communication and Interaction

Effective communication is crucial to the success of inclusive education. "Communication is the key to the effectiveness of any educational intervention. The possibility that styles of interaction may well differ between ethnic groups in establishing early communication was alluded to. Diverse styles may present confusing messages, at a non-verbal level; this may be compounded by the use of a language that is not their mother tongue, and consequently students may be at a distinct disadvantage." (Fergusson & Duffield, 2003: 36-37)

5.4.2.1 Parent

"There have been numerous initiatives over the last 40 years that have involved practitioner links with parents around education." (Todd, 2007: 65) However, about half of the participants expressed that the parents of ethnic minority students did not know Chinese, while some of them did not know English neither.

> *"Most of the parents of ethnic minority students don't know Chinese. They can't read Chinese. It is difficult to have further and in-depth communication. However, they are concerned about whether their children are treated unequally or not."*
>
> *(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"Most of the parents of ethnic minority students don't know Chinese and some of them even don't know English. We find it difficult to communicate with their parents."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school*

with IE training)

School circulars seemed the most reliable and sometimes the only way to communicate with the parents, under the condition that the students would remember to pass the circulars to their parents.

> *"In fact, most of the school circulars are written in Chinese and translated into English for the ethnic minority students and their parents. School social workers and teachers cooperate to translate those circulars and sometimes the assignment instructions. Although the parents don't mind the academic performance of their children but they are concerned about any unequal punishment on their children and communicate with the school actively and frequently."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

Some schools with more resources have employed ethnic minority staff to support the communication between the schools and parents.

> *"My school has three teachers and teaching assistants from three South Asian countries, so they can help to translate the school circulars to the parents of ethnic minority students. Sometimes, they also help communicate with the parents for some teachers such as making phone calls."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

> *"Actually, for those parents who come from India and Philippines, their English is better. For those who come from Nepal and Pakistan, most of them can only speak their ethnic languages only but can't speak or read English or Chinese. Therefore, my school has recruited a Pakistani teaching assistant to assist the communication with the parents and students from Pakistan."*
>
> *(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

For those schools which do not have sufficient resources, apart from relying on the extra workload of teachers, the relatives of ethnic minority students also

become contact points.

> *"Actually, some of the parents of ethnic minority students are also born in Hong Kong. They can speak Cantonese, but they still can't read Chinese. .... In some special cases, if the parents can't read and speak neither Chinese nor English, we can only communicate with their relatives who can speak or read English and/or Chinese"*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Most problematic was the reliance on students to pass the messages to their parents, sometimes via communication among the ethnic minority students' parents.

> *"Sometimes, the English version of school circulars may be delayed to send to the parents. I would ask the students to tell the content to their parents in advance and supplement the English circulars later. Actually, the communication among the parents of ethnic minority students is very close. I can make use of this to deliver some messages."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"Sometimes, we need to rely on the students to communicate with their parents. However, we can't expect the students can deliver the message accurately. This may depend on their ability too."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Participants expressed a range of opinions on the parents of ethnic minority students. For example, some felt that the parents misunderstood the purpose of the race discrimination ordinance, and then made more complaints to the schools and teachers.

> *"Even if there is an English version of school circulars to the parents, they don't read or pay much attention on those circulars actually. This is much different from the parents of local students. However, they like to make complaints, especially after passing the race discrimination ordinance last year."*

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Nevertheless, communication is very important to erase any misunderstanding between the teachers and the parents.

> *"For those parents with higher education level, they may approach the teachers actively. For those who are not, maybe due to too busy, they even don't come to attend the Parent Day activity. However, I think face-to-face communication is very important, although there may be some language barrier between us. Some possible misunderstandings can be avoided after communication. For example, providing supplementary class to their children after normal school hour can be misunderstood as punishment to their children."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

So, overall the issue of communication with the parents of ethnic minority students was treated seriously, with significant steps made to ensure that they were kept informed. Difficulties were addressed through a range of approaches, some more successful than others, with face-to-face communication less likely to lead to misinterpretation.

5.4.2.2 Student

When asking about the communication with the ethnic minority students, diversified responses were received from the participants. However, most participants teaching in mainstream schools found that their ethnic minority students could speak Cantonese as most were born in Hong Kong.

> *"Most of the ethnic minority students in my school are born in Hong Kong. Most of them can speak Cantonese but not necessary can read and write Chinese. Therefore, there is not much a problem in casual talk."*
>
> *(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school*

with IE training)

"I don't find they have any problem in communicating in Cantonese. But they don't have much interest in reading and writing Chinese. I like to contact them after lesson. During the lesson, they just sit and listen, so I don't know whether they really understand or not before test and examination."

(Participant 5, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

Some of the participants did try to make extra effort to take initiative to communicate further with the ethnic minority students.

"Some of my colleagues and I have tried to learn the ethnic minority languages. Although they know few words only, this is important to show our courtesy in communication and make them feel closer."

(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school with IE training)

"I would ask the ethnic minority students to share more about their cultures and religions with other students. By knowing more about each other, they can communicate and interact with each others better."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I mainly communicate with them in English unless they want to talk in Chinese. Particularly for the students who come from Thailand and Pakistan and just arrived at Hong Kong in short time, they can speak neither English nor Chinese. I will give some more assistance to them such as teaching them some Chinese songs first, after class."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

Most participants expressed that ethnic minority students did not have classroom discipline and some participants could not play a uniform role in front of students.

"As they don't have much sense about the norm of classroom and regulation of school, they don't know they need to obey anything. So, you must need to let them know the role of teacher and respect you by being serious. You can be friendly with them after lesson or outside the classroom."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

There was one participant concerned about committing mistakes by communicating too much with the ethnic minority students, after the enactment of the race discrimination ordinance.

> *"Apart from language, communication method may be another issue. Due to the culture differences, the local teachers and students don't dare to approach them at the beginning, especially after passing of the race discrimination ordinance."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Despite the apparent misgivings and concerns of this participant, overall it was clear that most participants made serious efforts to engage meaningfully with their ethnic minority students. Communication was perceived as the key, with a number of strategies suggested, including gaining familiarity with the students' language or culture.

5.4.3 Placement Arrangement

The school system can be restructured in several different arrangements under inclusive education. In Hong Kong, there are four main educational systems for ethnic minority students: designated school, mainstream school, designated class and small class in mainstream school. Under each arrangement, there are variations among schools with respect to implementation.

5.4.3.1 Designated School

The designated school arrangement was not deemed favourable for the implementation of inclusive education by all the participants.

> *"Most of the students in my school are ethnic minority students, so I don't think this is an ideal environment for them to integrate into the society."*
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

However, the collected feedback raised the issue of the trade-off between the academic performance of ethnic minority students and the success of inclusive education.

> *"If the purpose is on improving academic performance, I think it is better for the ethnic minority students to study in designated schools for them. ... It may be better for them to develop self-confidence, rather than always be behind the local students. Moreover, English is the medium of instruction in designated schools. This is good for the students to grasp at least one language, rather than bad in all languages. ... In the mainstream schools, I can't find any way to help them and feel upset."*
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"Frankly, the arrangement of designated school is better for the ethnic minority students. ... Of course, this may not be good for the inclusion of ethnic minority students into society. But I think this is a trade-off."*
> *(Participant 19, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

It was found that some designated schools had previously been mainstream schools. However, after enrolling more and more ethnic minority students, they became designated schools.

> *"Word-of-mouth is very important factor for the ethnic minority parents in choosing school. When they think my school is good, they would recommend my school to their relatives and friends.... Many years ago, my school didn't enroll many ethnic minority students. But now, most of*

the students in my school are ethnic minority students and the school becomes a designated school."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

With the increasing number of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong and the decreasing number of local students, an increasing number of mainstream schools have been enrolling more ethnic minority students and becoming designated schools. Otherwise, they may need to close down due to insufficient numbers of students.

5.4.3.2 Mainstream School

According to the experiences of participants, the ethnic minority students studying in mainstream schools without special arrangements usually failed to achieve good academic performance, although the arrangement does support integration into society and the implementation of inclusive education.

"The ethnic minority students have higher chance to become repeaters because they can't catch up the curriculum progress due to teaching in Chinese. In a special case in my school, there is an ethnic minority student who repeats to study at secondary one 3 times, as his academic performance is still at primary six only. Some supplementary classes have been provided to him. However, another issue is that his outlook is much older than the other classmates, which makes him appear strange in the class."

(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)

"Studying in mainstream schools is good for the ethnic minority students to integrate into the society in the future. However, such arrangement imposes heavy workload to the school, administration staff and teachers."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

The psychological development of ethnic minority students may be negatively affected if their academic performance in mainstream schools is always not up to standard.

> *"If the focus is on inclusive education rather than academic performance, studying in mainstream schools is better for the ethnic minority students. They can have more interaction with local students. However, their academic performance is usually behind. This will affect their self-esteem and self-confidence development negatively. I think this is not good."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Some participants had a negative impression of the academic performance of those schools that enrolled ethnic minority students.

> *"My school just started to enroll ethnic minority students three years ago. I feel that the mainstream schools, as like my school, which usually enroll ethnic minority students are of band 3, i.e. the lowest band."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

The overall perception of the participants was thus one of qualified support for the inclusion of ethnic minority students in mainstream schools. Their concerns related mostly to the additional load and reservations with respect to academic performance.

5.4.3.3 Designated Class

To balance the trade-off between academic performance and inclusive education, designated classes have been introduced by some mainstream schools. Participants generally support this arrangement.

> *"Since the number of ethnic minority students has increased in recent years and the number is sufficient to a class size. The ethnic minority students in*

my school have been allocated to a designated class for them. ... This arrangement can let us handle the curriculum design, manage the progress, and monitor the classroom behaviour easier. As for the extra-curricular activities, the ethnic minority students and local students are grouped to participate together. Therefore, they still have chances to interact with each other and understand other cultures to achieve the objective of inclusive education. I prefer this designated class arrangement to the pure designated school or mainstream school. I take this is a mid-point arrangement to balance the trade-off. And it can fit the Hong Kong context."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

But the designated class arrangement may violate the original aim of inclusive education in terms of studying together with local students.

"The ethnic minority students in my school are allocated to separate classes for all subjects.... the current arrangement may violate the original aim of inclusive education and the original intention for those parents in choosing my school for their children. Now, the students can only communicate and interact with the local students during break, extra-curricular activities and after school."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

However, a designated class can be arranged for a period of time such as one year for newly enrolled ethnic minority students to adapt to the new school and learning environment.

"For those ethnic minority students who have just arrived at Hong Kong and studied in my school, they are firstly allocated to separate classes to study for a certain period of time. This is like an induction period, usually one year. After that period, they will be re-allocated to the mainstream classes to study with other local students. I like such interim arrangement."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

This compromise position, between designated and mainstream schools, thus drew the most support from participants. Any reservations they felt were not sufficient to overcome the overall positive benefits they perceived for the students.

5.4.3.4 Small Class

Without separating the ethnic minority students from the local student class within the same school, some participants thought that small class teaching should be implemented, especially as there is low birth rate in Hong Kong.

> *"As the number of student enrolment of my school has dropped recently, my school can arrange smaller class size arrangement. I feel much better in classroom management and can pay attention to those students who need my assistance more. Moreover, I can even pair up one local student with one ethnic minority student to form mini group in some class activities."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"My school has a small class arrangement, about twenty students per class, for the three main subjects, i.e. Chinese language, English language and Mathematics. ... This is especially good for the ethnic minority students."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

> *"We have just implemented small class teaching for the students of primary one this year. ... I feel that all students can learn faster, including the ethnic minority students. And the teachers can take care of the needs of ethnic minority students easier. Actually, I find they have fewer problems in catching up the curriculum progress than before."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Even the participants from designated schools preferred small class teaching, due to the diversity of ethnic minority students in the same class studying together.

"As the ethnic minority students come from different countries, they have different culture and education backgrounds. Even though my school is a designated school for the ethnic minority students, it is very difficult to teach them together in large class size. Twenty students per class is the maximum. Otherwise, it seems impossible to adjust the curriculum and prepare teaching materials for all students."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

With respect to preferences regarding educational systems, participants thus came down squarely on the side of arrangements that fostered the integration of ethnic minority students into mainstream schools. That is, designated classes in mainstream schools, and/or small classes, rather than separate designated schools, were the preferred options. This was in spite of perceived challenges and practical difficulties, such as increased teaching load.

5.4.4 Training

Teacher training on inclusive education is not compulsory in Hong Kong. Training on the inclusive education of ethnic minority students is rarely offered.

"I think what the government or EDB should do is to give the related training to all teachers, not just to those who are teaching ethnic minority students. Without the knowledge on the issues, I think most teachers in the mainstream resist teaching the ethnic minority students."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

5.4.4.1 Internal

There was no internal training about the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in mainstream schools.

"There is no training about inclusive education of ethnic minority students in my school."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"Only the new teachers will be assisted with some internal training, but this is still not related to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

On the contrary, internal training was provided in designated schools. Although such training was not related to inclusive education, it helped the teachers to understand more about the background of different ethnic minorities that formed the basis of inclusive education.

"My school provides internal training for all new teachers about the culture and religious backgrounds and habits of different ethnicities."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

5.4.4.2 External

Participants had a variety of experiences in external training, with some having no such experience at all. Those participants who attended external training felt that the sharing sessions were especially useful in the sense of implications for and confirmation of their teaching approaches.

"I like to attend the external teacher training, as I can learn much from the experiences sharing of other teachers during the training. Their experiences in other schools may have direct or indirect implications to my thought, such as confirming my teaching approaches or reminding me some points I missed to consider."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

The need for sharing sessions was also expressed by those participants who did

not attend any training.

> *"I haven't taken any teacher training. I can only try my invented methods to teach and handle the ethnic minority students. ... When the school has some issues about handling ethnic minority students, they will find me. However, it seems I am not qualified to be the support as I didn't take any related training. It would be better if there are more sharing sessions with other teachers so that I can confirm the efficiency of my teaching approach."*
>
> *(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

It was generally agreed that the training sessions were particularly useful for new teachers. However, the schools usually sent the senior teaching staff to attend. Such feedback was reflected especially by those participants with shorter teaching experience.

> *"My school has teacher training policy to sponsor teachers to attend external training sessions .... However, this policy is mainly for the teachers of senior level. My rank is not high enough to get the sponsorship to take that training. And there are only some teachers to take training regularly. They will brief what they have learnt from the training to other teachers after the training. We may take these as internal training sessions."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

> *"Usually, the senior level teachers go to join the training organized by EDB. However, I think those training sessions are more important for the new teachers but they have less chance to join the training."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

Training is thus universally supported by participants, in line with both findings in the literature and Hong Kong Government policy. However, the implementation of that policy means that limited training resources are not always employed in the most effective manner, at least as perceived by participants.

5.5 Concluding Remark

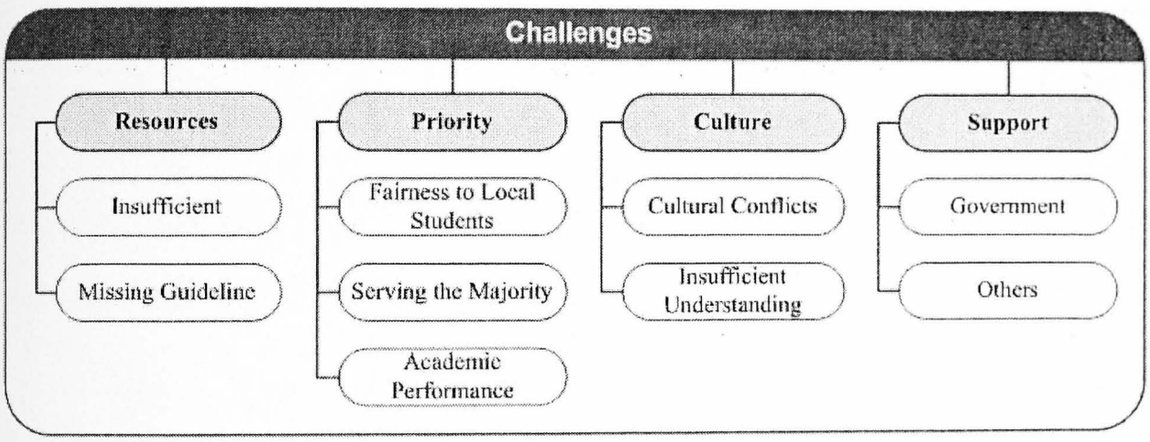
This chapter has presented the first part of the findings, focusing on the perceptions and experiences of the participants. Their general overall support for the concept of inclusive education is tempered at times by their practical experience in Hong Kong's educational system. This theme is taken further in the next chapter, which picks up on challenges, along with forms of support.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION – CHALLENGES AND FORMS OF SUPPORT

6.1 Challenges

After coding the collected interview data, the theme of Challenges was deemed to consist of four categories: Resources, Priority, Culture, and Support. Under each category, further sub-categories were identified, as shown in Chart 5.

Chart 5: Challenges Theme



6.1.1 Resources

Although all the participants agreed that the Government had increased financial support for ethnic minority students in the education sector, they thought the resources were still insufficient and not well utilized.

6.1.1.1 Insufficient

Although there is a School-based Support Scheme funded by the Government, nearly all participants thought that the resources were not enough.

"I believe extra resources are required because the ethnic minority students have their special educational needs which the local students do not have. One of the examples is to improve Chinese language. "

(Participant 15, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

"Without sufficient resources and support in mainstream school, not only the students, the teachers are the victims too. ... when the teachers want to help the students, they find no time and no way to help. They may feel powerlessness. They may feel pressure. This was also my experience in teaching mainstream school before. However, with sufficient resources and support such as high teacher-to-student ratio in this school, I don't have any psychological pressure and can enjoy my teaching."

(Participant 17, 8 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

6.1.1.2 Missing Guideline

Moreover, the guidelines in using the School-based Support Scheme for the ethnic minority students have yet to be clearly stated.

"From the EDB's webpage, I can find the information for teaching SEN students such as hyperactive, disability, dyslexia and so on. But I can't find any about inclusive education of ethnic minority students. .... Without guidance, I feel that the students are just wasting their time and may have false hope on the policy. Even if there is extra funding, there should be some guidelines in using it."

(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I feel that the government and EDB have put huge amount of financial resources to the schools with ethnic minority students. However, rather than the funding, I think the government or EDB should give more guidelines to the schools on how to use the extra funding. This may save some resources."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

An auditing procedure was proposed to confirm that extra funding could be more effectively spent on the ethnic minority students.

> *"The school receives extra funding due to enrolling the ethnic minority students. However, those funding are finally and partly spent in other activities, and not completely for the ethnic minority students. I think there should be a good auditing procedure."*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Unsurprisingly, the availability and deployment of resources emerge as an issue for most participants, with a plea for more effective utilization a common theme.

6.1.2 Priority

Most participants thought that there were two main dilemmas in implementing the inclusive education of ethnic minority students, especially in mainstream schools without special arrangements. These dilemmas relate to fairness and the priority to serve the majority.

6.1.2.1 Fairness to Local Students

Without a proper classroom management strategy, most participants in mainstream schools thought that this might be unfair to the local students.

> *"Classroom management is the first issue required to handle. The ethnic minority students don't have much sense to obey the norm of classroom. They feel free to walk around the classroom during a lesson. And their behaviour may affect the local students who want to learn."*
>
> *(Participant 19, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

The above views of participants align with some ethnic minority students' impression on teachers' stereotypical view of them as badly behaved and/or impolite (Ku et al., 2005).

6.1.2.2 Serving the Majority

Further, some participants thought that serving the majority group was the criterion in resources allocation, when the resources were not sufficient.

> *"I think there is a priority issue. Over 80% of students are Cantonese. So, it is normal to put the first priority to serve them first. Of course, the ethnic minority students are actually Hong Kong citizens. We should take care of them too. However, when the resources are limited, we need to make decision to serve either the majority or minority."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

> *"Apart from catering to the needs of the ethnic minority students, we also need to cater the need of the local students who are the majority. If resources are available, there is no problem. Otherwise, we should not emphasize too much on catering for the needs of ethnic minority students. Resources should be allocated with priority."*
>
> *(Participant 20, 9 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Participants thus demonstrated a stance somewhat at odds with other expressions of support for inclusive education when it came to hard decisions about resource allocation.

6.1.2.3 Academic Performance

Curriculum differentiation and adaptation, in order to deliver the curriculum to all, was seen as essential to make classroom teaching more meaningful and inclusion effective. However, it was also one of the biggest challenges for all schools. Nearly all teachers shared a concern for maintaining existing academic standards for all students. Heavy teaching workload was also a concern.

> *My challenge is on the priority between academic performance and inclusive education. If this is kindergarten, inclusive education can be placed as first priority. However, when there is a public syllabus, we can't neglect the progress and academic performance of all students. Then, we can't find time to serve their special educational needs. Even though I am willing to provide supplementary support on Chinese language subject to them, it doesn't mean all other teachers are willing to do so. Moreover, this may be unfair to the teachers. Heavy workload should not be a norm."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Some participants expressed that there was inherent conflict between the government and school expectation of inclusive education and academic performance. It seemed that it was very difficult to maintain the academic performance of students and the implementation of inclusive education at the same time.

> *"Although my school enrolls ethnic minority students, the mission of the school is on achieving high academic performance and winning in inter-school competitions. This makes me confused with the implementation of inclusive education, as it's like purely putting the students from different ethnic backgrounds to study together."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

6.1.3 Culture

The provision of mainstream schools originally met the needs of the majority of Hong Kong students, and the consequent additional resources provide opportunities for ethnic minority students. Mainstream schools which adopt inclusive education may be concerned that they will not be as attractive to parents, as examination grades may not be as high as those in neighbouring schools, which do not enroll ethnic minority students. In addition, parents may express concerns over the potentially disruptive nature of some ethnic minority students. A positive inclusive culture seems a pre-requisite for successful inclusion education. Such a positive culture can be established through efforts to create a common community, one that respects diversity (Tikly et al., 2004)

6.1.3.1 Cultural Conflicts

Different values on academic performance and school discipline are the main cultural conflicts expressed by the participants. As argued by Ogbu (1988), ethnic minority students and parents may be aware that the job market in Hong Kong does not operate in their favour, and so they see little point in putting a lot of effort into academic work.

> *"Some of the parents have stayed in Hong Kong for many years and can speak Chinese but think there is too rigid parental control in Chinese culture. However, from our perspective, we think their parental control is too loose. The ethnic minority students don't obey the classroom discipline. Their parents never discipline their children. Moreover, they don't care about the academic performance of their children."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

"Cultural difference is the main challenge and it makes me feel stress in teaching the ethnic minority students. Both ethnic minority parents and students don't think there is any problem if the students don't submit assignments or home work. ... Some of the parents even think it is not necessary for their children to go to school to study. Therefore, it is quite difficult to implement school-parent partnership."

(Participant 17, 8 year TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

It is not clear whether these negative perceptions with respect to parents come from direct interaction with them, or as secondary impressions from discussion with ethnic minority students. What is does reveal, though, is that at least some participants had little confidence in the parents concerning their support for education. A similar finding from the UK was reported by Tikly (2007), who found that low teacher expectations could be reinforced by indifferent parental attitudes, as well as lack of future aspirations and low academic expectations of students. This was tempered with a recognition of the need for greater understanding of cultural differences.

6.1.3.2 Insufficient Understanding

Some participants expressed that they, including their students, did not know much about the cultures of ethnic minority students and thus the teaching and learning experiences of ethnic minority students were negatively affected. Insufficient understanding about the cultures of counter ethnic groups can cause misunderstanding with each others (Ku et al., 2005; Yuen, 2004; Fordham, 1996).

"I think we know too little about the culture and background of those ethnic minorities. ... On the contrary, they also need to understand our culture. Otherwise, they may also use the wrong perspective to interpret our behaviour. Finally, misunderstanding will be caused."

(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)

Communication with the ethnic minority students could be one way to improve the understanding about their cultures, but this was limited to those students who were more mature and can express themselves effectively.

> *"The school hasn't introduced and given briefings about the cultures of different ethnic minorities. The teachers can only find out the answers by asking the ethnic minority students, as there is no official information for them to study. However, this may only be applicable to the secondary school students. The primary school students may not be able to explain too much."*
>
> *(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Additionally, there can also be misunderstandings among different ethnic minority students and parents in designated schools, because they do not know much about each others' culture. Inclusive education should also be promoted in designated schools.

> *"Actually, the ethnic minorities and their children also don't know much about the cultures of other ethnic groups. There are also some arguments among the students and their parents of different ethnic backgrounds."*
>
> *(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

6.1.4 Support

Major responsibility for the co-ordination of support may rest with a limited number of people, but in determining how support is organized it is important to link student support, for both individuals and groups, with staff and curriculum development activities (Booth, 2002).

6.1.4.1 Lack of Government Commitment

Most participants responded negatively to the Government's level of commitment to the principle of inclusive education of ethnic minority students and to its determination to achieve positive change. Without the support from the Government, it would be very difficult to implement the inclusive education of ethnic minority students.

> *"I don't find any support from the government or EDB to help us implement inclusive education of ethnic minority students, except some training about inclusive education of SEN students. In my school, we have arranged extra support groups such as translating test and examination papers and providing extra-curricular activities for them. It seems there is no support on teaching and learning for them. After telling you that there will be five ethnic minority students in your class in this academic year, the school won't tell you how to teach the ethnic minority students with local students in mainstream classroom."*
>
> *(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"I feel that EDB has paid more attention to NCS students by assessing the suitability of Chinese language curriculum for the students. But then, I don't see any further support, especially on inclusive education, has been provided by EDB."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

The support from government is not just about funding, but is needed in other forms such as changing the class size and providing a sample curriculum of some subjects for inclusive classes with ethnic minority students.

> *"I think the government has provided financial support to the schools. If ten marks are the maximum, I will give 8 marks on this. However, whether the funding is used efficiently is another question. ... the government can provide a set of curriculum of some subjects for ethnic minority students to use in mainstream schools."*

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

"Normal class size is 44 students a class. Therefore, if the government wants to show support, the class should be allowed to adjust to less than 22. This may be the easiest way for the government to support the implementation of inclusive education."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

6.1.4.2 Non-holistic Plan

As argued by Mittler (2000), apart from the financial support from the Government, the success of inclusive education depends to a large extent on the ways in which the Government, schools, teachers, parents and communities respond to the challenges and opportunities that are now available. A holistic plan of support is required.

"Inclusive education is a very complicated process. It is not only about placing the students from different ethnic backgrounds to study together in the same school, but also about the support of their school lives such as academic performance, extra-activities participation, friendship with other students, teacher trainings, awareness and understanding of cultural differences, and so on. Apart from extra support, a good plan of support is also required."

(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

Most participants observed that family support for the ethnic minority students was insufficient.

"We can't expect their family support, as they can't support them due to their educational level, language ability and occupation limitation. We find that no matter how many extra supplementary classes provided for the students, the outcomes are not obvious. All support can only be done during school time."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school

with IE training)

Moreover, it was considered insufficient for only the teachers to be making the effort to implement inclusive education without any other support. Without such additional help, the outcome is not as effective and efficient.

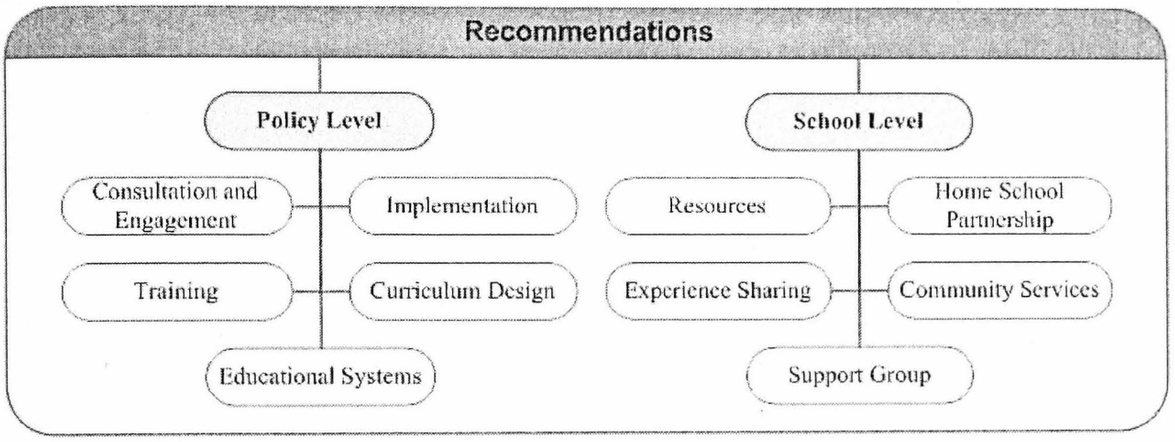
> *"Before talking about teaching and learning, the ethnic minority students' attitudes to education should be guided by extra support such as counseling and mentorship. Otherwise, only the efforts paid by the teachers will not gain any good returns. Teachers can't talk too much on the non-syllabus content in the mainstream class, when the local students don't have such problem."*
>
> *(Participant 13, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)*

This section has provided details of the challenges faced by teachers of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong schools, which are perceived by participants as relating to resources, priorities, culture and support. Not only are resources considered insufficient, but what resources that were provided were not used well, because of insufficient or absent guidelines for their effective use in the classroom. The issue of priorities raised the difficulty of balance with respect to the trade-off between efforts on behalf of the ethnic minority students and the legitimate needs of local students. The examination system with its specific standards and requirements served to focus these concerns, as there was a belief that many ethnic minority students could not and should not be expected to reach the same norms, especially in language education. Participants recognised the challenges raised by cultural differences, which can lead to conflict, with some making specific efforts to increase cultural understanding through classroom activities. The call for increased support was made not just to Government, but to all involved in the education system, with the importance of family support highlighted.

6.2 Recommended Forms of Support

After coding the collected interview data, the theme of Forms of Support was found to consist of two categories: Policy Level and School Level. For each category, further sub-categories were identified, as shown in Chart 6.

Chart 6: Recommendations Theme



6.2.1 Policy Level

The recommended forms of support at policy level include: the consultation and engagement of teachers, the implementation of institutional policies, teacher training, curriculum design and the arrangement of school settings. Each of these will now be discussed.

6.2.1.1 Consultation and Engagement

Inclusive education can include a variety of objectives: to diminish a perceived ethnic problem; to eliminate discrimination and promote intergroup harmony; to foster genuine equality and justice for ethnic minorities; and/or to improve intercultural sharing, understanding, and communication. Diversity in objectives

often reflects differences in how parents, teachers, students, administrators, politicians, and business people perceive the role of inclusive education in a society. It also reflects our understanding of what inclusive education is, what it is trying to do, why, how, and with what consequences. For such complicated practical issues, consultation with experienced practitioners should be required (Booth, 2002). All participants held the same view, that the government should launch teacher consultation before implementing the policy.

> *"If the government really wants to implement the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students, teacher consultation is a must. Otherwise, without understanding the barriers in reality, good idea will also cause many negative effects which are not expected.... the government or EDB should carry out engagement exercise to achieve consensus and plan the next step to implement."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

> *"I feel that the top level officials and bureau are not from education field. They don't understand the challenges faced by the teachers. ... They just think the inclusive education of ethnic minority students is a good idea and force it to implement as a policy. There are many negative feedbacks from the teachers because there is no good practical plan. By carrying out teacher consultation, more concerns on potential and practical plans can be raised to discuss and address."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"I don't think this policy can be implemented by a top-down approach. Teachers should be consulted to understand more about the feasibility of implementation and gain some practical recommendations. The officials just borrow the idea from other countries but do not consider the difference between the local contexts."*
>
> *(Participant 14, 5 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

6.2.1.2 Implementation

It is one thing to design curriculum in support of inclusive education. It is yet another to put these initiatives into practice. We need to examine the different problems throughout the implementation of institutional policies, programmes, and practices. In addressing the demands of cultural accommodation and social equality, the participants believed that the Government should strike a balance between the competing needs of ethnic minorities, the school population at large, and society in general.

> *"The inclusive education policy of ethnic minority student is not just for the schools with ethnic minority students but all schools in Hong Kong. ...The government should provide a official document about the policy to all schools to explain the objectives, describe the details and implementation methods, list the sources of support, and so on."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school with IE training)*

> *"The policy should be reflected in recruitment procedure by telling the applicants about the mission of inclusive education and making sure sharing the same mission."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

> *"I think the content about the policy can be included in the general education subject, so that the message of inclusive education can be delivered to all schools and students."*
>
> *(Participant 7, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

> *"Mass media should be used to promote the policy. It should not be hardly promoted but softly presented via the participation of ethnic minorities in some TV programmes, so that the audiences including the local people and ethnic minorities will accept we are all parts of society and can live, study and work with each others in the society."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

There was thus universal support for the policy in general, with the participants offering a range of suggestions as to how to effectively promote it.

6.2.1.3 Training

Intercultural competence is still not automatically part of teacher education in Hong Kong. Teachers should be trained to accommodate ethnic-cultural diversity in their classrooms, to be able to reflect critically on it in relation to their professional agency, and be able to implement several intercultural approaches (Cochran-Smith, 2001; Gay, 2002; Ladson-Billings, 2003).

> *"Teacher training is a must. This should be the first priority task for the government to do, as the teachers must have the basic techniques to teach the ethnic minority students."*
>
> *(Participant 2, 6 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school witht IE training)*

Teachers must be aware of the potential meaning of ethnic identity in personal life, for the feeling of well-being, and in the learning outcomes of all students in the education system (Leeman & Volman, 2001). They should be able to develop an ethnic-culturally responsive pedagogy and interculturally inclusive curriculum (Leeman & Ledoux, 2003). The teachers should be trained to know how to use suitable ways to teach the students from various ethnic minority cultural backgrounds in learning different subjects such as Chinese language and also other subjects.

> *"Teacher training is necessary. The learning difficulties of ethnic minority students are different from that of local students. Current teacher education doesn't cover how to handle this. This may not be directly related to inclusive education but at least helpful to improve the academic performance of ethnic minority students."*

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school witht IE training)

The provision of extensive opportunities for training at the pre- and in-service levels should be seen as a top priority for the policy-makers. The assumption here is that if teachers receive assistance in mastering the skills required to implement an innovation such as inclusion, they will become more committed to the change and more effective as their effort and skill increase.

> *"After knowing the educational needs of ethnic minority students, the teachers should also know how to meet the needs. Related teacher training is therefore necessary."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

In this respect, it could be concluded here that while educators are likely to show initial resistance to any innovative policy, their attitudes might become more positive later on, as they develop the necessary expertise to implement the policy and experience the success of their efforts (Avramidis & Norwich, 2002).

> *"Not many teachers understand much about the scope of inclusive education, including me. ... Therefore, related teacher training is required. Before knowing the skills to implement inclusive education, the concept about it should be taught to all teachers."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

6.2.1.4 Curriculum Design

Teacher education on general principles of curriculum differentiation and delivery should aim to help teachers identify the essential features of curriculum items in order to facilitate the learning of these features in manageable steps.

> *"To implement inclusive education, more guidelines should be provided on curriculum design. For example, all primary 3 students in Hong Kong are*

required to participate in the TSA public examination to assess students' ability and basic knowledge in Chinese language, English language and Mathematics. In this case, how the school adjusts the curriculum for the ethnic minority students is a big question to the school, when academic performance is the top issue of most schools, parents, and students in the Hong Kong culture. Therefore, the guidelines can list the areas of core content and the ability level of different contents."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

In addition, a balance of content knowledge, cognition and life skills appropriate to the needs of each individual should be taught.

"If I were the in-charge of school, I would introduce more bridging courses for the ethnic minority students, especially for those who are new arrivals. The bridging courses should also be able to adjust the learning practice of ethnic minority students until they can catch up the progress with other local students."

(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

Another important principle is to provide a unified, rather than a competitive, curriculum. The principle can be applied to the key learning areas.

"I think there should be a unified curriculum designed for the ethnic minority students. .... After accumulating several years of teaching experiences of the schools and EDB, it should not be too difficult to design a unified curriculum for the ethnic minority students. At least, there should be some benchmark and standard to set."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

It was also suggested that information on the cultures of ethnic minorities could be included in the curriculum of the general education subject. In support of this notion, it is reported (Tikly et al., 2004) that diversity in the curriculum is a feature of high achieving schools. Inclusive education is not just for those local students studying with ethnic minority students. Every student may have a

chance to study or work with ethnic minorities in the future.

> *"I think the topic of inclusive education should be included in the syllabus of general education subject, when this may become one of the core values in Hong Kong society."*
>
> *(Participant 7, 1 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

> *"Some subjects in mainstream schools should cover the cultures and histories of South Asian countries such as general education and/or civic education subjects. Local students should learn more about these, even if they are not the classmates of ethnic minority students. ... local students should respect the others from different cultures and countries."*
>
> *(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Participants were thus not simply calling for curriculum reform, but were keen and willing to suggest particular strategies and direction for curriculum redesign for inclusive education.

6.2.1.5 Educational System

There were diversified recommendations on the educational system in Hong Kong. It was generally agreed by the participants that sufficient induction programmes and/or bridging courses should be provided, especially for newly arrived ethnic minority students in mainstream schools.

> *"Induction programmes and/or bridging courses can be provided to the ethnic minority students before the start of academic year or enrollment."*
>
> *(Participant 5, 1 year TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)*

Moreover, small classes were highly recommended by the participants for implementing inclusive education. As noted in the previous section about the challenges faced by the participants, classroom management was a serious

concern in implementing inclusive education. Smaller class size was expected to be helpful.

> *"To cater for vary educational needs in inclusive education class, the class size should be as small as possible. ... Of course, 35 students in a class is too big to implement inclusive education. I think the school receiving extra funding from the government for implementing inclusive education should be encouraged to implement small class teaching in parallel."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

As for the arrangement in designated schools, it was suggested that more Chinese language courses should be provided, as the major medium of communication in Hong Kong is Chinese.

> *"In designated school, there should be some courses of communication in Chinese, so that the graduates can communicate with the local people in Hong Kong. Their English is not bad, but the English standard of Hong Kong people is varied."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

On the other hand, in order to help schools make decisions about how to implement inclusive education, some participants suggested that the Government or EDB should provide information about the effectiveness of different arrangements in implementing inclusive education in designated and mainstream schools.

> *Thus, I suggest the advantages and disadvantages of different arrangements between designated school and mainstream school should be described in the EDB related brochure and/or website for all parties to reference."*
>
> *(Participant 8, 10 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

6.2.2 School Level

The recommendations at school level should be based on the realistic needs of the school as an organization. The participants' recommended forms of support at school level include: the availability of resources, home school partnership, experience sharing among the teachers from different school, community services and support groups.

6.2.2.1 Resources

A number of studies have investigated the influence of environmental factors in the development of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. One factor that has consistently been found to be associated with more positive attitudes is the availability of resources and support services at the classroom and the school levels (Clough and Lindsay, 1991). Here, resources can be considered as both physical (teaching materials, IT equipment, a restructured physical environment, etc.) and human (learning support assistants, linguistics teachers, etc.). One of the main suggestions made by most participants was to increase resources to improve the Chinese communication skills of ethnic minority students.

> *"Resources should be firstly put on providing Chinese language tutorial services to the ethnic minority students. Without sufficient language and communication ability, they will find it difficult to enjoy the lessons."*
>
> *(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)*

As for the communication with the ethnic minority parents, additional resources were suggested that would enable the employment appropriate supporting staff, rather than solely relying on teachers.

"Additional resources can be used to employ some more teaching assistants who are also ethnic minorities but can speak fluently Cantonese and read and write Chinese. They can help much on the communication among the schools, students and parents."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in maintsream primary school with IE training)

At the same time, some participants recommended that the EDB provide more guidelines in utilizing the funding of the School-based Support Scheme and also other possible school resources in implementing inclusive education.

"More guidelines should be provided in telling the schools how to use the resources."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Some participants also suggested that students could be included as effective resources in implementing inclusive education. Students can support one another informally without teacher planning, or formally with school or teacher planning such as a mentorship programme (Charlton 1998; Mittler, 2000).

"We can make use of student resources. The students spend about eight hours in school a day. Classmates are the most helpful resources to the students, as the students interact and communicate with other classmates more than their parents and teachers."

(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

Two kinds of student activities were proposed to make use of student resources. Firstly, by forming study groups to create the environment of mutual assistance between the local and ethnic minority students, more positive interaction and follow-up actions were expected to happen. Moreover, by organizing mentorship programmes, the ethnic minority graduates could share their experiences with the junior students.

"Local students can also be taken as resources. ... They can form study group with ethnic minority students. At the same time, the ethnic minority students can arrange some activities to introduce or promote their cultures to other students and teachers. On the other hand, the senior ethnic minority students or graduate can help on the mentorship activities for the junior ethnic minority students. Of course, these are all voluntary activities."

(Participant 15, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school without IE training)

6.2.2.2 Home School Partnership

Home school partnership is a key element of any school strategy aimed at improving achievement, as it targets the involvement of parents (Tikly et al., 2006). However, "there is no simple answer to the question of what kinds of interactions between parents and practitioners are likely to assist inclusion. A more involved relationship for parents with schools and services has been a growing feature of policy and practice over the last 40 years." (Todd, 2007:63) Nevertheless, participants believed that the partnership between parents and school was crucial for the effectiveness and maintenance of any learning that had taken place both inside and outside the classroom.

"I think it is very important to link teachers, students and their parents together. The interaction among them has a great impact on the implementation of inclusive education policy."

(Participant 12, 5 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

"The ideal model is that the parents can also take the responsibility in educating their children, ... So, I think there should be more communication between the parents and schools when both parties have different expectation of each other. At the beginning, home school partnership can be taken in the forms of some seminars or briefing sessions.

After having more understanding of each other, further partnership and cooperation can be planned."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"No matter how much the teachers do for the students, there is limitation without the support of their parents. For example, the teachers design some helpful assignments. ... As the students are still very junior and not much trained with self-discipline, they need the supervision from their parents at home. For the local parents, most of them understand their part of responsibility. But this is not true to the ethnic minorities. So, there should be a formal home school partnership arrangement."

(Participant 14, 5 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Such views align with suggestions in the UK's Commission for Racial Equality report (Tikly, 2004), which promotes the involvement of parents and the community in school life and development.

6.2.2.3 Experience Sharing

More experience sharing sessions among the teachers from different schools were requested by the participants. Providing opportunities for training does not necessarily address or influence how teachers feel about inclusive education of ethnic minority students and how teachers implement in real school and classroom settings, Teachers need opportunities to reflect on the experience of change that affects their values and beliefs as well as influencing their daily teaching practice.

"There are different kinds of local students. There are also different kinds of ethnic minority students. Accumulating related teaching experience is very important. The fast track to gain such experiences is by listening to and learning from the experiences sharing by the experienced teachers."

(Participant 1, 4 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"I think experience sharing by other teachers is more effective than formal teacher training. .... Some misunderstandings on the ethnic minority students can be corrected at that time. Some skills on handling the classroom management can be transferred. Some expectations on the academic performance of ethnic minority students can be adjusted."

(Participant 3, 3 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"Teaching experience sharing is especially important for new teachers. Different schools have different scenarios, teaching environments, students from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Only those who are experienced can tell some inside stories such as some special case of some students."

(Participant 9, 9 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Most participants in mainstream schools supported the principle of inclusive education of ethnic minority students but had doubts about whether it would work in their schools and also had hesitation to explore any possible solutions. A platform for experience sharing was recommended.

"Learning through the experience sharing from other teachers is better than exploring by myself. ... If there are many ethnic minority students in a school, maybe a support group can be formed to provide the platform for the teachers to share their experience and exchange their points of views."

(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)

"Communication among the teachers within the school is not really much in my school. Communication with the teachers of other schools is far from much. ... More communication among the teachers within the same school and of different schools is a very good learning process for the teachers. ... experience sharing from the teachers of other schools can unblock the way of thinking the teachers in the same school. Therefore, EDB should organize more large scale teaching experience sharing platform for the teachers of all schools."

(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

Experience sharing within the same school might help the ethnic minority students experience smooth transition from lower form to higher form.

> *"In practice, different teachers may be responsible for certain levels of classes. For example, I am responsible for primary 1 to 3. When my class of students is promoted to primary 4 to 6, other teachers will teach them. So, experience sharing for passing the information to the next teacher is important."*
>
> *(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

6.2.2.4 Community Services

By garnering support from outside agencies, schools were able to call on expert counsel when needed, and this added to the motivation of staff by showing that there was an interest from external organizations regarding inclusion. Riehl (2000) explains that schools are not isolated entities, but belong to networks of community organizations and institutions that deal with young persons and their ever more complex needs. Schools should thus be establishing connections with their local communities and existing supportive networks.

> *"School can introduce some community services for the students as supplementary services of school education. Recently, there have been more community services for ethnic minorities. ... it is more flexible for a community centre to help the ethnic minorities to promote their cultures to the community. Maybe a school can make use of the extra funding from the government to outsource some services to the community centre."*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

Such views are supported in the literature, an example being: "Strong relationships among schools and the community offer opportunities for greater connectedness; an expanded understanding of resources available to support

students and schools; and an increased likelihood for successful transitions between school and community." (Jorgensen et al., 2006:13) The potential connectedness can extend to the families of the ethnic minority students as well.

> *"In Hong Kong, it is usually that the students are living within the school district because of the central allocation system. So, the school can approach the district community centres to exchange their views on the needs of ethnic minority students and the implementation of inclusive education. They may collaborate to work out some programmes to the students. ... the community services can be regarded as continuous services after school hours."*
>
> *(Participant 16, 7 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)*

6.2.2.5 Support Group

Support groups in schools enable teachers to support one another. This is in addition to informal sources of support that teachers develop whenever they have an opportunity to briefly discuss problems. According to the participants who proposed support groups, there was no set or preferred pattern. They suggested that a small group of teachers should meet regularly to discuss either particular students, or more general concern relating to barriers to learning and participation for the ethnic minority students.

> *"It is good to have a support group to implement inclusive education of ethnic minority students. It can serve as a platform for home school partnership, teacher experience sharing and internal teacher training."*
>
> *(Participant 4, 12 years TEEMS in mainstream primary school with IE training)*

> *"A support group can be like an information centre. ... By establishing a support group in the school, teachers can work together to search related information such as the cultures of different ethnics and find out the best teaching approaches. Sometimes, we can't rely too much on the*

government and EDB, as there are too many details in the implementation under different situations."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

The communication and collaboration among the teaching colleagues mainly depended on the attitudes and autonomy of teachers, the structural arrangement and the division of labour in the school.

"In my school, some of the teachers mainly teach the classes with ethnic minority students. They may attend more related training. Then, they will share their teaching experiences and what they have learnt from the training with other teachers. As for the communication among the teachers from different schools, it is usually coordinated by EDB."

(Participant 6, 2 years TEEMS in designated primary school without IE training)

"The communication among the teachers mainly depends on the attitude of individual teacher. In my school, the turnover is quite high. So, it is important for the existing teacher to share their experiences with the new teachers actively, while the new teachers should approach the existing teachers for experiences sharing too."

(Participant 11, 2 years TEEMS in designated secondary school without IE training)

"As my school is a 'through train' education provider, most of the new students are from the same primary school. Therefore, we may contact the primary school teachers for more details about some students when necessary. This is kind of informal support group in the sense."

(Participant 18, 8 years TEEMS in mainstream secondary school without IE training)

The issue of support was one with which the participants keenly engaged and were readily able to offer critical comments and suggestions for improvement. Many of their perceptions were based on experience in their schools, with both positive experiences and perceived needs coming through. At both policy and school levels, consultation and communication were considered crucial in improving

support for ethnic minority students, through recommended forms of training, experience sharing and the involvement of families and the community.

6.3 Concluding Remark

This and the preceding chapter have presented and discussed the findings of the study. Evidence gleaned from the teacher interviews has been analysed to identify themes, categories and sub-categories, which in turn have been assembled to produce a framework. This framework thus reflects experienced teachers' perspectives on inclusive education for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSIONS

This chapter draws conclusions about the research questions, based upon the insights derived from the literature review and the findings. Implications of the study are elaborated in terms of theoretical and practical knowledge. Reflections on and limitations of the study are discussed. Possible areas for further investigation are proposed.

7.1 Conclusions about the Research Questions

The objective of this study was to investigate how to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system via educational support and services in Hong Kong, from the perspectives of teachers, and directed by four main research questions. The four questions focused on the perceptions, experiences, challenges faced and needed forms of support by teachers. This section draws conclusions about the research questions one by one.

7.1.1 Perceptions of Teachers

The perceptions of teachers towards the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong are dynamic, rather than static. Most of the participants held a broad definition of inclusive education and thought that inclusive education policies should include ethnic minority students. However, most of them held a negative view on the chance of successful implementation of the inclusive education policy of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. The following concerns were expressed by teachers during the interview process: the practical

realities of inclusive education; unsuccessful experiences in mainstream schools; and funding and resources (some teachers did not trust schools to spend money devolved to them for the intended purpose). Most of participants did not agree that the policy of inclusive education of ethnic minority students was highly supported and strongly promoted by the Government or EDB. Nevertheless, most participants showed positive attitudes and beliefs toward the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

7.1.2 Experiences of Teachers

The experiences of teachers with the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong are also dynamic. Somewhat at odds with the evidence of previous research in other contexts, participants with longer teaching experience are more supportive of inclusive education policy. However, they found it difficult to improve the underachievement in academic performance of ethnic minority students because the current curriculum did not address the needs of these students from disadvantaged backgrounds and did not focus sufficiently on raising achievement. Nearly all participants shared a concern for maintaining existing academic standards for all students. However, given the tight timetable and curriculum syllabus, very few attempted to tailor the curriculum to the diverse needs of the students and, of those who did, their strategy was to reduce the quantity of curriculum materials.

Some participants thought the students created the learning barriers themselves. Other participants focused on their parents, believing that they did not support their children in learning Chinese and hence such students could not follow the

daily lessons in mainstream schools. Moreover, the local teachers and students do not understand the learning styles of ethnic minority students and thus the teaching and learning experiences of ethnic minority students are negatively affected.

According to the participants, to balance the trade-off between achieving high academic performance and successful inclusive education, the preferred option is a designated class or small class teaching in mainstream schools, as their experience of such arrangements was positive. Moreover, the participants indicated that without in-service and pre-service teacher education on curriculum differentiation and the delivery of the curriculum to all students, they would have found it very difficult to teach the inclusive class with ethnic minority students at the beginning.

7.1.3 Challenges Faced by Teachers

The challenges faced by the teachers relating to the inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong are quite similar for all those teaching in mainstream schools, irrespective of the school setting arrangements. They believed that their schools could not enjoy government funding via the School-based Support Scheme, even though the resources were insufficient in their schools. As for the participants teaching in designated schools, they thought the guidelines for using the funding were insufficiently clear.

Some participants expressed that there was an inherent dilemma between the government and school expectation of inclusive education and academic

performance. Moreover, different values on academic performance and school discipline among the schools and students and parents comprised the main cultural conflicts expressed by the participants. Insufficient understanding about the cultures of ethnic minorities negatively affected the teaching experiences of teachers and learning experiences of students.

7.1.4 Needed Forms of Support Perceived by Teachers

The forms of support perceived as needed by teachers to support the inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system are grouped at policy and school levels.

At policy level, to provide proper forms of support, consultation and teacher engagement in policy formulation and planning implementation details are crucial, because teachers are the key change agents. This recognition of the central role of teachers was a prime motivator for the explorations in this study.

In addition, initial teacher education is crucially important in familiarizing new entrants to the profession with the nature of inclusive education, and in providing them with relevant skills for teaching ethnic minority students in mainstream schools. Limited access to appropriate training has often resulted in the perpetuation of negative perceptions towards ethnic minority students. Newly qualified teachers require at least a basic understanding of inclusive education of ethnic minority students. This lays the foundations for good practice on which later generations can build and provides a critical mass of young teachers who have understanding and experiences of inclusive practice with ethnic minority

students. Teacher education on general principles of curriculum differentiation and delivery should aim to help teachers identify the essential features of curriculum items in order to facilitate the learning of these features into manageable steps for inclusive classes.

It is also important to reach principals in mainstream schools, since their active leadership and support are essential to the achievement of change along inclusive lines. Although different arrangements in school settings have their advantages and disadvantages, small class teaching is the preferred arrangement to meet the learning needs of ethnic minority students and local students; to improve the quality of inclusive education; and to balance the trade-off between the expectation on academic performance and the implementation of inclusive education.

At school level, apart from funding to designated schools, mainstream schools should also be sponsored to increase additional resources for ethnic minority students. Such resources can be used to provide Chinese language tutorial services and employ teaching assistants who are also ethnic minorities but can speak Cantonese fluently and read and write Chinese. These assistants can help with communication among the schools, students and parents.

Local students can also be taken as a resource. Study groups and mentorship programmes should be introduced. Inclusive education is about all students, not just a few. It involves changing the culture of the school to ensure access and participation for all students currently in the school and also for others who are now in segregated provision but who may be joining the school in the future.

Moreover, home school partnership should be promoted. It is sometimes

claimed that attempts to bring parents and teachers together will not work for the poorest families, those who have literacy difficulties themselves or those whose first language is not Cantonese/Chinese. During the interviews, participants usually blamed the parents failing to ensure that children do their homework and do not roam the streets. Due to different composition of the family backgrounds of students, every school needs its own home school partnership policy and includes concrete proposals for achieving better working relationship with parents.

"No school is an island and no school can succeed without developing networks of partnerships with its local community, with parents, past, present and future and with other schools and other agencies." (Mittler, 2000:178) Apart from parents, effective partnerships among teachers within the same school can be introduced in the form of support groups, while teachers from other schools can share their experiences, and the expertise of local communities should not be neglected.

7.1.5 Overall Conclusion

The findings and conclusions presented in the analysis and discussions reveal that teachers, although generally positive about inclusive education, do not display a shared approach to inclusive education. This study also reveals that the evidence regarding the factors affecting the perceptions are inconsistent and none of them emerges as a single strong predictor of the perceptions of teachers. What can be reasonably concluded from the study is that increases in resources and support would impact positively on the perceptions of teachers.

Both pre- and in-service teacher training must also be priorities. It seems clear that teacher commitment and effectiveness will increase through the mastery of required teaching skills in the implementation of inclusive education. In similar vein, another conclusion is that although most teachers might initially resist an innovative policy, as skills and experience in implementing the policy are developed, they eventually become more supportive because of their success.

Fundamentally, inclusive education implies that all teachers are responsible for the education of all kinds of students. In this task, the teachers are entitled to expect and to receive appropriate preparation in initial teacher education and continuing professional development throughout their careers. They also deserve support from their schools, principals and the Government, as well as from the external support services to the school. This should be clearly expressed in the school development plan and the inclusion education policy for ethnic minority students.

7.2 Implication of Study

This study contributes to existing research in inclusive education in two ways: filling gaps in current knowledge of inclusive education in Hong Kong, and providing recommendations for improving the policy and practice of inclusive education.

7.2.1 Extending Existing Knowledge

Existing educational research on ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong is small-scale, piecemeal, and of insufficient volume to make a meaningful contribution to policy. Previous studies have focussed on revealing the challenges faced by minority ethnic groups at different levels of their education in Hong Kong in the areas of access to educational opportunities, academic performance and curriculum design. Further, since ethnic minority groups comprise such a small percentage of the overall population in Hong Kong, their interests, educational needs and aspirations can be overlooked. In order to better inform policy makers and educational administrators, it is clear that there is a need for more research on ethnic minority education in Hong Kong.

This study has achieved the aim of constructing an analytical framework of teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong, consisting of themes, categories, and sub-categories. For the participants, four themes were paramount: their perceptions of inclusive education, their teaching experiences, the challenges they faced, and their recommendations for improvement. For each of these themes, details, contextual factors and complexities were revealed through an emerging pattern of categories and sub-categories, all contributing to the overall picture.

The framework should thus be seen firstly as a model with which to engage with and improve current approaches to inclusive education in Hong Kong. It is not offered as a 'universal truth' to translate or transfer to other contexts and locations, but as a starting point for considerations in any educational system. It can also serve as a comparative instrument for those offering alternative approaches and

strategies.

7.2.2 Practical Knowledge

The voice of educators is not reflected in previous Hong Kong studies. "One of the key criteria to identify an inclusive school is the willingness of the regular classroom teachers to take responsibility for teaching the diversity of students presented to them in inclusive classroom." (Jobling et al., 2003:178) The teachers are the professionals in the field and supposed to be able to understand the details and propose corresponding strategies. At the same time, they may also be facing their challenges and bounded by structural issues to make change.

By collecting the information from educational practitioners, this study contributes through the provision of practical recommendations on the educational support and services required for the inclusive education of ethnic minority students.

This study reflects the voice of teachers that was missing in previous studies in Hong Kong. They expressed the challenges they were facing in implementing the inclusive education policy for ethnic minority students. As the participants are the professionals in teaching field and are able to understand the details and constraints, their proposed forms of support are based on their real experiences and can be considered as more feasible for application in the classroom and beyond.

7.3 Reflection on Methodology

A qualitative approach was used in this study because of its special strengths, as discussed, while at the same time appreciating its potential weaknesses. Its reliance on significant experience and insight means that it is not typically recommended for novice researchers. However, the researcher has considerable experience in both qualitative and quantitative approaches, which, combined with contributions to a number of substantial projects, ensured that the required skills were in place.

As the focus of the qualitative approach was on the identification of themes and categories and the formation of an analytical framework, there was a need to collect extensive and exhaustive data, reaching a point of saturation (Morse, 1994). This is the point (or points) where further data collection produces no additional categories nor insights in a particular category or sub-category. For this reason, more participants than originally anticipated were interviewed. Saturation enables the researcher to present explanations, generalisable findings and theories that account for all facets of the research questions with confidence.

This is not to claim that the present study answers all questions. Rather, it can highlight the need to adopt a range of research approaches to investigate the perspectives and perceptions of teachers. As Eiser (1994) notes, traditional psychological studies of perception have focused on the 'individual self' as central to investigation and analysis. This has typically resulted in the 'psychologizing' of social issues, thus ignoring the role of social interactions in developing the psychological process. As discussed, most previous studies, especially in Hong Kong, used quantitative research approaches (usually a survey) to investigate and

thus report on 'individualistic' experience of inclusive education.

The deficiency of this approach, as Eiser further explains, is that the 'individual' and the 'social' are interdependent. That is, perceptions are not purely personal, but arise through interaction with other teachers in the school system. This is the essence of a wider interpretation (to typical questions like 'What is going on here?') of the qualitative approach, and which depends on and responds to contextual factors associated with a specific environment such as a school. So, while this has been at least partially acknowledged in this study, future studies of teachers' perspectives of inclusive education could employ a whole range of relevant qualitative research methods, including life history, narrative and autobiography. Application of such methods will increase our knowledge and understanding of the complexities and interrelationships through investigation of personal experience, perception and practice.

7.4 Limitation of Study

This study does not claim to be an all-encompassing investigation of inclusive education with respect to ethnic minority students. The focus is the perspectives of teachers, and does not include contributions from others in the school system, including administrators, policy makers, support staff, parents nor students. However, the narrowness of the approach can also be considered a strength, in that it allowed greater depth of investigation and analysis than might otherwise have been possible.

For this research, semi-structured interviews were used to investigate the participants' experiences, thus allowing the researcher access to their teaching environment to gain an understanding of their perceptions of inclusive education and how they implemented it in their classrooms. Simply by being invited and being part of the study, teachers may be influenced to provide responses and perceptions that they believe the researcher wants to hear, rather than a genuine reflection on their experience. They may also tend to focus on outstanding or more unusual incidents and non-typical examples, thus failing to reveal their true daily practice. The potential limitation of dilution of the quality of the data thus exists.

There was no direct or implied evidence that this limitation eventuated. Protection against it and to thus ensure that the teachers' experiences were genuine included the fact that the researcher had no formal or informal connections to the participants, who were volunteers assured of confidentiality and privacy. Further, constant comparative analysis was used to cross-check the data and preserve the underlying structures of the coding and the development of themes and categories.

7.5 Further Investigation

Studies of teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education have increased recently, though not necessarily in Hong Kong. Further research is required to ascertain what extra factors are influential in forming positive teaching attitudes. For

example, research could focus on the quality of teacher training with respect to inclusive education, and include aspects such as the timing (pre- or in-service), duration and curriculum, or investigation of teacher experiences with different groups of students. The perspectives of others, mentioned above in the limitations, would also provide fertile ground for future research.

This might lead to the fruitful investigation of a whole range of factors within schools that influence the effectiveness of inclusive education, including resource utilization, school culture and organization, and instructional policy. Such research can lead to further insight into how teachers can be better supported in their efforts to ensure that inclusive education is a positive experience for all parties.

Further investigation thus has the potential to deepen our knowledge of the reality and complexity of inclusive education, and thus give direction for any needed and appropriate changes or extension of current initiatives.

7.6 Reflection Statement

I am confident that this research has produced a substantive analytical framework of teachers' perspectives on inclusive education of ethnic minority students in Hong Kong.

In the last two years, issues surrounding ethnic minority groups have been discussed in different levels of meetings, events, public forums and conferences in

Hong Kong. As the focus is still on informing the public about discrimination against the ethnic minority groups in Hong Kong, more and more Hong Kong people have become aware of the existence and educational needs of ethnic minority groups. They are no longer 'invisible'.

Although this study is an assignment for my fulfillment of the degree qualification, I hope this research can really make a contribution towards the achievement of inclusive society by revealing the voice of one of the key change agents: teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix I: Timetable of Study

This study was taken for about two years. The following timetable presents the progress of study.

Month	Date	Study Proposal	Literature Review	Seeking advice from other researchers	Study Design	Pilot Study	Data Collection and Analysis	Wrap-up
1st	2007-06							
2nd	2007-07							
3rd	2007-08							
4th	2007-09							
5th	2007-10							
6th	2007-11							
7th	2007-12							
8th	2008-01							
9th	2008-02							
10th	2008-03							
11th	2008-04							
12th	2008-05							
13th	2008-06							
14th	2008-07							
15th	2008-08							
16th	2008-09							
17th	2008-10							
18th	2008-11							
19th	2008-12							
20th	2009-01							
21st	2009-02							
22nd	2009-03							
23rd	2009-04							
24th	2009-05							
25th	2009-06							
26th	2009-07							
27th	2009-08							
28th	2009-09							
29th	2009-10							
30th	2009-11							
31st	2009-12							
32nd	2010-01							
33rd	2010-02							

Appendix II: Schools Operating the Initiation Programme for NCS Children

Schools Operating the Initiation Programme for Newly Arrived Non-Chinese Speaking Children including Returnee Children in 2008/09 school year

Primary School

Delia English Primary School & Kindergarten

Portuguese Community School

Secondary School

Delia Memorial School

Appendix III: Kindergartens Offering Other Language Subjects

Kindergartens Offering Language Subjects other than Chinese and English

	School	Other language subjects offered
1	German Swiss International School (KG)	German
2	Korean International School (KG Section)	Korean
3	Lycee Francais International (French International School)	French
4	Lycee Francais International (French International School) (Sheung Wan)	French
5	North Point Kindergarten of Oisca	Japanese
6	Oisca Hong Kong Japanese Kindergarten (Kowloon)	Japanese
7	Teikyo Hong Kong Kindergarten	Japanese

Source: EDB 2008

Appendix IV: Primary Schools Offering Alternative Language Subject/Adaptation of Chinese curriculum for non-Chinese speaking students

	School	Other language subjects offered	Adaptation of Chinese curriculum for NCS students
1	Delia (Man Kiu) English Primary School (DSS)	French	Yes
2	Diocesan Boys' School (DSS)	French (Core) Japanese Korean and Spanish (Electives)	Yes
3	Hong Kong Taoist Association School	Urdu is offered in optional interest groups	Yes
4	Islamic Primary School	Urdu and Nepali are offered in optional interest groups	Yes
5	Li Cheng Uk Government Primary School	Hindi and Urdu	Yes
6	Li Sing Tai Hang School	N/A	Yes
7	Man Kiu Association Primary School	Urdu, Hindi and Nepali are offered in optional interest groups	Yes
8	Po Leung Kuk Camoes Tan Siu Lin Primary School	N/A	Yes
9	Po On Commercial Association Wan Ho Kan Primary School	N/A	N/A
10	Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School	Hindi and Urdu	Yes
11	St Margaret's Co-Educational English Secondary & Primary School	Spanish (optional for primary)	Yes
12	Yaumati Kaifong Association School	Urdu and/or Nepali are to be offered in optional interest groups	Yes

Source: EDB 2008

Appendix V: Government and Aided Secondary Schools Offering Alternative Language Subject/Adaptation of Chinese curriculum for non-Chinese speaking students

	School	Other language subjects offered	Adaptation of Chinese curriculum for NCS students
1	Delia Memorial School (Broadway)	French (optional)	Yes
2	Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)	N/A	Yes
3	Diocesan Boys' School (DSS)	French (Optional)	Yes
4	Diocesan Girls' School	N/A	Yes
5	Good Hope School (DSS)	French (S1-S5)	Yes
6	HKMA David Li Kwok Po College	N/A	Yes
7	Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College	Urdu and Nepalese (S1-S3)	N/A
8	La Salle College	French (S1-S5)	Yes
9	Marymount Secondary School	French (S1-S5)	Yes
10	Po Leung Kuk Ngan Po Ling College (DSS)	French (S1-S5)	Yes
11	Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (West Kowloon)	French Hindi Urdu and Chinese (GCSE level)	Yes
12	St. Joseph's	French (S1–S5)	Yes
13	St. Margaret's Co-Educational English Secondary & Primary School	French / Japanese (optional)	Yes
14	St. Mary's Canossian College	French (S1-S5)	Yes
15	St. Paul's Convent School	N/A	Yes
16	YMCA of Hong Kong Christian College	N/A	Yes

Source: EDB 2008

Appendix VI: Designated Schools for Non-Chinese Speaking Children

List of designated schools for non-Chinese speaking children in 2008/09 school year

Region	District		Level	School Name
Hong Kong Island	1	Wan Chai	Primary School	Sir Ellis Kadoorie (Sookunpo) Primary School
	2	Wan Chai		Li Sing Tai Hang School
	3	Wan Chai		Po Kok Primary School
	4	Central & Western		Chiu Sheung School Hong Kong
	5	Hong Kong East	Secondary School	Islamic Kasim Tuet Memorial College
Kowloon	6	Kwun Tong	Primary School	Hong Kong Taoist Association School
	7	Kwun Tong		Man Kiu Association Primary School
	8	Wong Tai Sin		Islamic Dharwood Pau Memorial Primary School
	9	Yau Tsim & Mong Kok		Yaumati Kaifong Association School
	10	Yau Tsim & Mong Kok		Jordon Road Government Primary School
	11	Sham Shui Po		Li Cheng Uk Government Primary School
	12	Kwun Tong	Secondary School	Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo)
	13	Sham Shui Po		Delia Memorial School (Broadway)
	14	Yau Tsim & Mong Kok		Sir Ellis Kadoorie Secondary School (West Kowloon)
New Territories	15	Tuen Mun	Primary School	Islamic Primary School
	16	Kwai Chung & Tsing Yi		C.N.E.C. Ta Tung School
	17	Yuen Long		Pat Heung Central Primary School
	18	Yuen Long		Yuen Long Long Ping Estate Tung Koon Primary School
	19	Yuen Long	Secondary School	Pak Kau College

Source: EDB 2008

Appendix VII: Informed Consent Form for Interview

The interviewees were asked to sign the informed consent form before starting the interview.

Informed Consent Form for Interview

Inclusive Education of Ethnic Minority Students in Hong Kong: Teacher Perspecti

Introduction to the Interviewees

The objective of this study is not to discuss the issues of human right or race discrimination but investigate how to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education syst via suitable educational support and services.

Consent on Voice Recording

The consent on voice recording is sought before starting the interview.

- The interviewees will have the right to terminate the voice recording at any time of intervi process.
- The interviewees will also have the right to get a copy of their individual voice records. But tl will need to express such request immediately after the interview, as the voice records will destroyed after transcription.
- The transcribed records will be kept anonymous with assigned codes.
- The code sheet will be encrypted with a password in a computer and will also be destroyed aft year of the completion of study.

Confidentiality Concern

- Confidentiality of the subject in the process of the whole study will be protected.
- Anonymous quotation in publications or presentation will be used.
- Any quotation that will reflect the identity of interviewee will be avoided too.

I have read the above and consent to participate in today's interview. I have been offered a cop this consent form that I may keep for my own reference.

Signed by Interviewee: _____

Name: _____

Signed by Interviewer: _____

Name: _____

Date: _____

Appendix VIII: Interview Questions for Semi-structured Interview

1. Background Information

- *How long is your teaching experience, including in other schools?*
- *How long have you been teaching in this school?*
- *What are the subjects and level you are teaching?*
- *How many ethnic minority students are in your class and school?*
- *What are your approaches to teaching?*
- *Is there any difference in your approach to teaching local and ethnic minority students?*
- *How long has your school been receiving ethnic minority students?*
- *What is your involvement in teaching ethnic minority students in the school?*
- *Were you involved in teaching ethnic minority students before teaching in this school? If yes, for how long? Can you share with me some more details?*

2. Perceptions and Experiences

Teaching and Contact Experience

- *Can you share with me any good and/or bad teaching/contact experiences with ethnic minority students in your school?*
- *How do you think your teaching experience with ethnic minority students affects your perception of inclusive education?*
- *What do you think about the influence of contact experience (such as in some extra-curricular activities) with ethnic minority students on teachers' perception toward inclusive education?*
- *Are there any other factors you think would affect the teachers' perception toward inclusive education of ethnic minority students? And how do they affect it?*
- *Do you face any challenges in supporting inclusive education of ethnic*

minority students in your school? What are they?

Training and Education

- *Did you take any training and/or education on inclusive education of ethnic minority students? Or have you been taking any? Or do you have any intention to take a related training/course soon?*
- *What do you know about the available training and/or education? Does your school provide such kind of internal training/education for staff?*
- *How do you think the training and education influence your perception and experience of inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*
- *How do you think the training and education can help teachers support inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*

Beliefs and Socio-political View

- *What roles do you think the teacher and the school should play in supporting inclusive education – please say why you think this - can you give examples etc.?*
- *Can you share with me your personal views on the issues surrounding inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*
- *An inclusive ethos – or effective learning and teaching and high achievement?*

3. Educational Support and Services

- *What do you think are the main barriers against the ethnic minority students to learning and participation? Do you have any recommendations to minimize the barriers in your school?*
- *Are there regular opportunities for you and your colleagues to share and discuss their practical strategies?*
- *Do you and your colleagues work together to develop a common philosophy on inclusive education and to consider the actions which will ensure it is put into effect?*
- *What practical action can you personally take to work with colleagues in developing inclusion?*

- *What steps could the school take to create the conditions for a real community of belief in inclusive education?*
- *What are your experiences of the communication with the parents of ethnic minority students?*
- *Any educational support and service is required for local students to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system?*
- *What is your opinion of government policy concerning the inclusive education of ethnic minority students?*
- *How clearly is the focus of the School-based Support Scheme on providing support on inclusive education for ethnic minority students with additional support needs understood by you?*
- *If you were the in-charge of your school, how would you list and rank at least three educational support and services to achieve better inclusion of ethnic minority students within the education system?*

Appendix IX: Data Analysis Process

The following table presents the coding process on the selected text units (with highlighted in yellow.

Analyzing transcripts and selecting text units	Coding	Translating the coded text units
Sample transcripts from some interviews. A: Interviewer B: Interviewee		
A： 就着你教導的學生，如果他們希望繼續升讀中學，你認爲他們應該升讀主流學校還是在指定中學升中？		
B： 如果在學業上，他們應該在指定中學，其實我很贊成讓他們升讀能幫助少數族裔學生的學校，雖然這些學校主要用英語授課，但教學語言會很集中，不像現在要學英文、廣東話和普通話，最後他們一樣也學不會，如果那邊能把他們集中在一起，我想課程會適合他們，但在我們學校，我們要自行調適，由於我沒受過正規培訓，就算嘗試很多不同的教學法，教學效果也不明顯，而對他們的幫助也不大，或許現在做了會有成效，但目前還看不見，故教他們會很棄餒，當然他們愛和我說話，雖然彼此關係很好，但他們卻不	Designated school preferred Formal training Relationship with students	For academic purposes, they should be in a designated secondary school to pursue their study. In fact, personally, I agree to let them to study in the school that can really help them. In a designated school, the teaching language is mainly in English, unlike now, when they need to learn English, Cantonese and Mandarin. The result is that they can't learn anything well. And the curriculum in designated school is suitable for them too. As I didn't have any formal training, my teaching is not very helpful for them, even if I try many different teaching approaches. They surely like to talk with me. And our relationship is very good. However, they still won't complete the target that I instructed them to do. This makes me very upset.

會按你的要求完成目標，這樣就會倍感生氣，既然和你的關係那麼好，爲何他們還不把它做好，其實他不懂和不想做，原因爲何永遠都不知道，故我認爲他們要學一些基本智識，他們必須學會，就如加減乘除，這是他們必須具備的智識，我想必須給他們調配，由於目前的主流學校沒有給他們提供任何支援，所說的支援就是找我，但我沒受什麼培訓，再說又有那麼多的學生，試問我可照顧誰？如果我不斷給他們支援，但卻沒有成效，這樣我會很棄餒，我想我要把焦點放在有成效的學生中，如果學校可以做到這些，我想會比我的效果還要好。	Mainstream school problem	There is no special support for them in current mainstream school. Maybe the so-called support is to find me. However, I didn't have any training and there are many students in class. How can I take care of them all?
A：起初安排指定學校，他們會有額外資源，讓他們產生示範作用，從而給主流學校分享經驗，你們知道會有這些用途嗎？ B： 我不知道，當然我不能代表學校說。 A：如果知道，會否嘗試接觸他們分享經驗？ B： 最主要是教學法，其實和他們相處問題不	Communication and interaction	Actually, there is no problem to be together with them. As long as there is no mention of academic achievement issues, there is no

大，如果撇除學業問題，因爲他們會說廣東話，甚至連粗俗語言也會說，然而他們和其他本地學生的社交生活也沒問題，其他本地學生也不因他們是少數族裔而歧視他，雖然在我第一年的教學中也有這些，但已警告他們，但在學業上卻無能爲力，因爲他們的成績確實太差！就像今年我接手六年級數學，他們連乘數都不會，雖然他從幼稚園已在香港讀書，但他在六年級連乘數表都不會，這樣就很困難。	with students Academic performance	problem with their social lives with other local students, because they know Cantonese even can speak local foul language. And other local students don't discriminate against them due to their ethnic minority status. In academic matters, I feel powerlessness in helping them, as their academic performance is really too bad. Take my mathematics class of primary six as an example, they even don't know the calculation of multiplier. But they started their learning from the kindergarten till now in Hong Kong.
A： 如果讓他們在指定學校讀書會有幫助嗎？ B： 是的，在指定學校起碼會有辦法，我找不到辦法，就說他不會讀，他有讀寫障礙，我也會有辦法幫他，但對他們，我真不知如何！就如作文，其實有時看見他們，大家都很難過。	Designated school preferred	There must be some solution in a designated school. I can't find any method. If they have dyslexia, I may find some ways to help them. But for them, I really don't know how to handle it here.
A： 如果說找指定學校分享經驗，正規訓練會否好點？		

B： 我認爲經驗分享會好一點，就算是正規訓練中，能從別人的經驗分享可以學到更多，這樣就可做好一點，不像現在的學校老師沒受多少訓練一般。像有系統的分享會其實不多，只是在訓練期間才能分享。在我修讀的課程中，也會把學校的問題互相分享，這樣從別人身上便可多學一點，就如怎樣處理有攻擊和傷害行爲的學生，至於少數族裔學生的教學方法則很少聽到，大部分老師認爲他們調皮，而且又愛說謊，這樣便會抗拒教導他們，要想接受他們，並在成績上扶助他們確實更難，其實接受他們已算作出調適，如果還想怎樣幫助他們確實會很困難，因爲他們連最基本的也忘記，到底是他不想學，還是我教得不好，或是讓他們以圖畫來記憶會好一點，我不知道怎樣幫他記憶會一點，故我對他們並不認識和了解。	Experience sharing among teachers Negative belief	I think experience sharing sessions would be better. Even in formal training, I can learn much more from experience sharing with others from other schools. Most teachers think they are naughty and like to lie, and hence don't want to teach them. It's not easy to make the teachers accept those students and help their academic achievement. Actually, acceptance of teachers is also an adjustment for those students.
A： 有沒有外援可以幫忙？ B： 我也希望！其實我也曾向輔導主任反映，他只叫我們盡量調適，就算怎樣調適，他們也	Curriculum	No matter how we adjust the curriculum for them, they still can't follow. Moreover, some fundamental learning content can't be

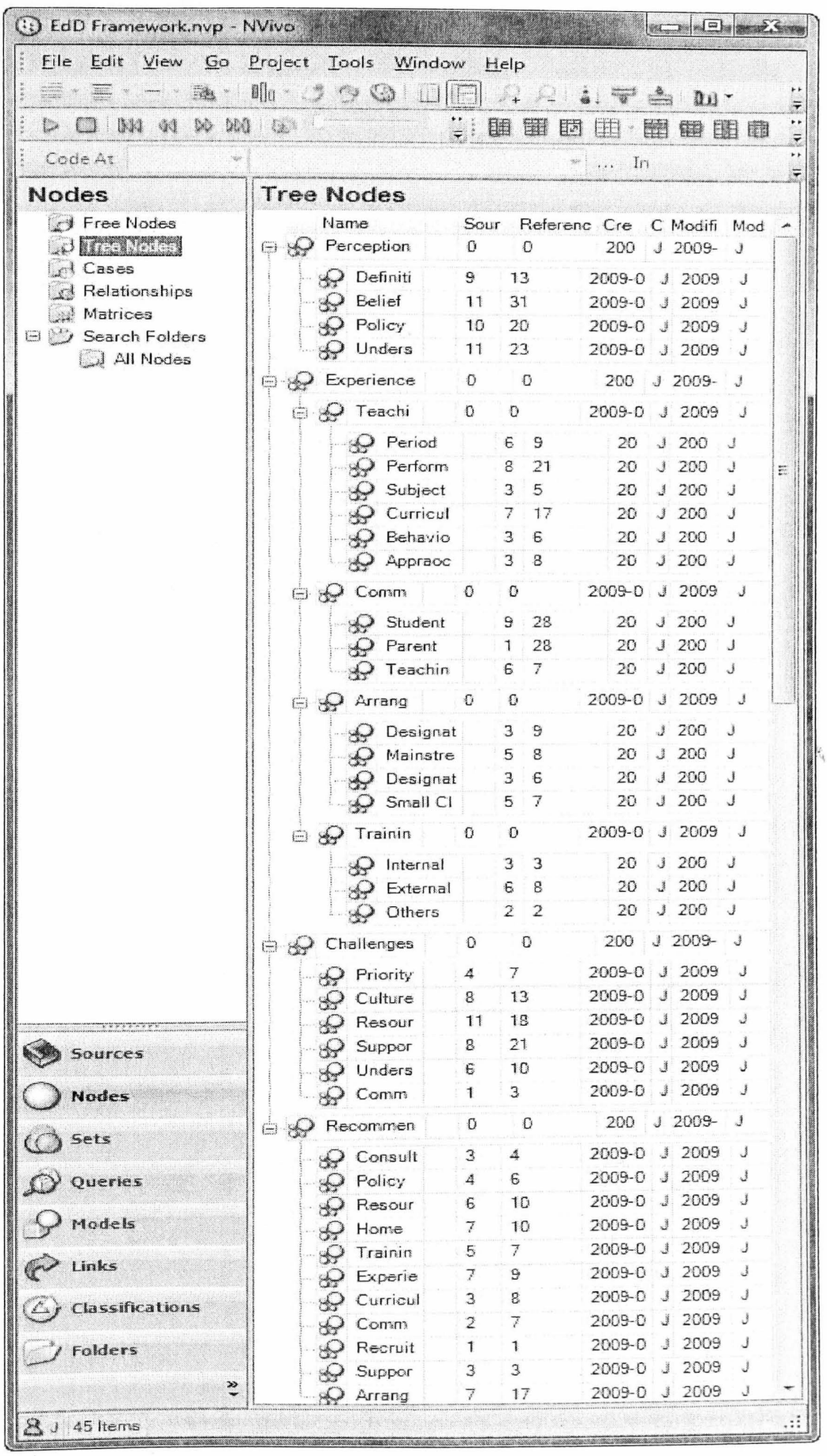
跟不上，而且有些基本內容，他們必須學習，故不能刪減，要不就不能符合課程要求，當然我可從基本教起，就如日、月等字形，但我還需兼顧課程。確實我也感到吃力，故我只教重點，但他們連重點都不能掌握，確實他們學得很辛苦，我會把關鍵詞語告訴他們，讓他們會寫會默，掌握意思和組織句子，或是學習句式等，雖然學不會也不要緊，這些已是額外添加，我們可在小組一起研究，但他們連詞語都學不了，甚或連字都認不了！他們的程度差距太遠。	design Academic performance	deleted. Otherwise, they can't meet the curriculum requirements. It is really difficult for them to learn … … they even can't learn phrases and single words. There is a big difference on the academic level compared with local students.
A： 如果在政府層面，你認爲政府可做什麼？或是政府推行融合教育明不明顯？老師能否知道？ B： 明顯我校老師並不知道，其實所有老師都要接受培訓，不管他有沒有教，也要知道這些，其實融合教育的定義很廣，但政府政策有否包括他們我不清楚，說到成功與否我也不懂。	Definition Government policy	The definition of inclusive education is very broad. I am not sure whether the government policy includes them or not, and can't comment whether the policy is successful or not.
A： 其實老師們的看法是否各有不同？		

B： 有些老師不認識，不懂何謂融合教育，或許以爲在教育安置上已是融合，其實理念並非這樣，其實融合教育的層次很高，而且很難做到完全的融合教育，就算我也不能完全認識，從態度上應該讓他們認識，其實學生很敏感，知道老師的態度怎樣，或許有時會有鄙視和看不起，他們就會愛理不理，其實這些情況很多，我不會這樣，但有部份老師確實不喜歡這些學生，質疑爲何要浪費資源幫助他們，或是讓他們進特殊學校或指定學校，主流學校不想接收。	Understanding of inclusive education Negative belief and attitude	Some teachers don't know what inclusive education is. They may think that placing the students from different ethnic groups to study together is inclusive education. In fact, the idea of inclusive education is at very high level and not easy to achieve. Some teachers really don't like them and think it is wasting resources to teach them. They think those student should be sent to special education school or designated school. Mainstream schools don't want to enroll them.
A： 有沒有在教育局尋找資源？ B： 其實我尋找主流教育關於少數族裔的很少。有時我也不懂他們到底是言語障礙適應困難、專注力不足或是本身有學習障礙，我們也不掌握，除非用母語學習就會知道他有沒有學習障礙，由於他們抗拒學習，故我不知道。	Insufficient resource and support	I can only find very few resources for ethnic minority students in mainstream education. Sometimes, I don't know the problems they have, such as dyslexia, adaption problem, insufficient concentration power, or other special educational needs. I can't identify and handle.
A： 在教學上提供支援，或許學校因資源所限而		

需外援，需要什麼外援？ B： 所需外援就是老師培訓，最起碼在教學上可以幫助他們，而不僅是耐性和愛心，因爲這些都是最基本的，至於具體怎樣推行，我也想知道。	Training	The external support should be teacher training. At least, I can learn how to teach them on academic issues.
A： 你認爲老師的個人信念和態度對融合教育的推動影響有多大？ B： 其實會很嚴重，而且影響力很大，就算他本身認識，但卻抗拒融合教育，而且在教導學生上有選擇性的愛好，他就不願接納這些學生，這樣就會無法推行。	Personal belief and attitude: importance	The impact of the personal belief and attitude of the teacher is very serious and large. Even if they know the concept of inclusive education, they may reject implementing it, as they may have selective teaching preference and won't accept to teach these students.
A： 在經驗累積上，你覺得在第一年及第三年有何分別？ B： 當然有，現在和他們相處會容易一點，其實第一年的感覺很特別，因我很少接觸他們，但當努力教導他們但卻不懂就會很棄餒、憤怒和抗拒，當然現在明白就會自行調整心態，但不代表可以完全幫助他們，或許我在第一年也不能幫他什麼，但卻不會長期處於	Teaching experience: period	There is big difference after accumulating a certain period of teaching experience with them. It feels easier to be with them now. The feeling during first year of teaching them is very special, as I didn't have much contact with them before. When I tried my best to teach them but they couldn't follow, I would feel upset and angry and reject them. Now I know how to adjust my attitude, although this doesn't mean I can help them completely.

憤怒和激動的狀態，就像知道他們作文不行，我會幫助他們，以前就會一定要他作文，但現在卻不會，這樣就可平和一點。		
A： 會否間中有點喜出望外？ B： 會的，因我沒什麼期望，而且期望很低，如果他們會寫「我」字，我覺得他們很棒，我便讚賞他們，當然他往後會錯很多，但已經很高興，然而以前卻不會有這樣的高興！就如在第一年，也不掌握期望真的會那麼低，現在我會放得低一點，如果他能做多一點，我認爲他已經很棒，就如他數學拿到三十多分，我認爲他已經做得很好。	Low expectation	My expectation of them is very low. If they can write the Chinese word "I", I would feel they are great and appreciate them. Although there are still many things wrong, I still feel very happy … … In my first year of teaching them, I couldn't handle it and adjust my expectation to such a low level but now I can do it.

The coded text units were translated and input to NVivo according to the themes, categories and sub-categories (as shown below in the Tree Nodes in NVivo). The tree structure was data-driven and re-arranged several times to construct the analytical framework.



Appendix X: Detail Analytical Framework

Chart 7: Detail Analytical Framework